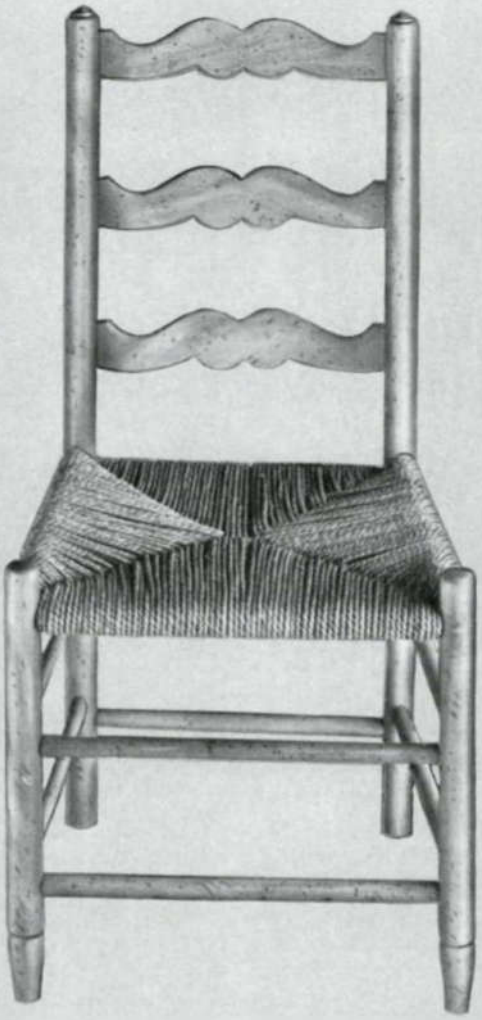
# The Beaver

SUMMER 1977



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# The Beaver

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**COVER:** *'Summer Afternoon — The Prairie'* by L. L. FitzGerald. Painted in 1921. Reproduced by kind permission of his daughter, the late Mrs. H. W. Morrison of Toronto. From The Winnipeg Art Gallery Collection.


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*Eliza Field and Peter Jones, from portraits painted in London during their courtship. Photographed by Graham Storms from the originals in Victoria University Library, Toronto.*

# *The Transatlantic Courtship*

By Donald B. Smith

*The author teaches history at the University of Calgary. He is currently preparing for publication a modern biography of Kahkewaquonaby, the Reverend Peter Jones.*

BEFORE ELIZA FIELD left England for Canada her fiancé had to warn her of the white settlers' opposition. 'The fact is my beloved Eliza' his letter painfully began 'they think it is not right for the whites to intermarry with Indians.' Would she now refuse to marry him? He need not have worried. The hostile comments of some 'colonials' in Upper Canada did not alter her decision. In her reply Eliza simply announced that she would leave Lambeth as soon as possible for New York. There, in early September 1833 — the week her ship landed — Eliza Field was married to Kahkewaquonaby (Sacred Waving Feathers) — the Reverend Peter Jones, a missionary whose mother was an Ojibwa Indian woman.

# *of the Reverend Peter Jones*

Today inter-racial marriages — particularly between North American Indians and whites — are a relatively common occurrence. This was not the case a hundred and fifty years ago. In 1843, for example, Peter Jones estimated that in all of Upper Canada there were only three or four Indian men married to white women, and no more than three or four Indian women married to white men. When Peter himself had married in 1833 the event was noticed in newspapers from London, England, to New York. And four years later New York still vividly remembered the wedding. Indeed when Eliza passed through the city in May 1837 the New York *Sun* recalled her first visit 'three or four years since' when 'the romantic lady created quite a "sensation" in this city by giving her hand in matrimony to Peter Jones, a converted Indian.'

How had the 'tall, dark, high boned muscular Indian' and the 'little, fragile, delicate English lady' (as one London newspaper described them) met? What common interests brought them together? Why did Eliza resolve to defy established convention and marry the man she loved? The story of their unusual courtship can be told by the use of Peter's diary — published shortly after his death in 1856 — and a cache of Eliza's diaries recently discovered in a dusty file-box in a storage vault at the Victoria University Library in Toronto.

*A drawing by Eliza of 'The house in which I spent eight happy years as a schoolgirl' — the students' residence at her boarding school.*

COURTESY OF LOUISE THORP, VANCOUVER

Today the Lambeth that Eliza would have known as a child has been altered beyond recognition. In her day the south bank of the Thames (just opposite Westminster) would have been crowded with boatyards, wharves, and potteries. Now it is dominated by the Royal Festival Hall, Waterloo Station, and the London County Hall. Eliza grew up in the area once known as 'Lambeth Marsh' immediately behind the riverside. Over the last century and a half most of what would have once been familiar to her eye has been levelled, first by the building (in 1848) and subsequent extensions of Waterloo Station, and much again by the devastation wrought by the bombing in World War II. Walking through Eliza's neighbourhood in July 1976, I could find only a handful of old buildings, one of which now advertises itself as the home of 'Twinkles Hot and Cold Lunch.'

In the year of Eliza's birth, 1804, Lambeth still remained a relatively small town with a considerable amount of uninhabited marshland. With the completion of the Waterloo and Vauxhall bridges in 1816 and 1817 more and more land was drained, and new buildings sprang up. From 1801 to 1831, in fact, Lambeth's population trebled to nearly 100,000. This overly-rapid development brought new problems to the town. By 1831 gin palaces were everywhere and in that same year the figures for drunkenness in Lambeth were higher than in any other part of London.

As a local factory and property owner Eliza's father, Charles Field, worried about Lambeth's decline. He belonged to an old Lambeth family whose soap and candle business went back over two centuries. A devoted Christian, Charles Field belonged to Surrey Chapel, founded and led by the Reverend Rowland Hill, one of the great evangelical preachers of his day. In revolt against the religious indifference of the age Hill had struggled for nearly half a century to build up Surrey Chapel until its congregation had become the largest in London. His chapel undertook charity work throughout Lambeth and the immediate surrounding area, attempting to aid the sick and the impoverished. This was the evangelical chapel in which Eliza was raised, baptized, and where she taught Sunday-school until her marriage.

Human beings are full of contradictions and in this respect Charles Field conformed to the general pattern. He did indeed have a social conscience, and was genuinely concerned about the plight of the sick, the maimed, and the 'honest' poor, but that did not preclude him from owning two luxurious houses. The first was in Lambeth Marsh near the factory and the second was six miles to the south at Norwood. In the early nineteenth century Norwood was renowned, in the words of one of its publicists, for its 'elevated situation, the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and the salubrity of the atmosphere.' Until the 1850s it was delightfully rural with meadows and cornfields, clear sparkling trout streams, and great tracts of woodland. As late as 1802 the area was so isolated that a hermit known as 'Matthews the hairyman' lived there undisturbed in a cave in the wood. Gipsies still frequented the great North Wood (or Norwood as it was now called).

Charles built 'Holly Cottage' on the Norwood street now known as Gipsy Road. (Although substantially remodelled the old house still stands, but today it is sadly wedged between a 'housing estate' to the north and a coin-operated laundry to the west.) Here the Fields came 150 years ago to escape what we would call today the 'inner city'. At Norwood Eliza kept her pony, riding it at will over the neighbouring countryside. She loved the village and its inhabitants. 'What a joy' she wrote in her diary in 1829 'to turn the eye from countenances wan with care, flushed with intemperance, or ghastly with famine, to cheeks brown with wholesome experience, or ruddy with health and contentment.'

As a child Eliza had benefited from all the comforts and luxuries affluence could provide. She attended a fashionable boarding school for eight years, studied landscape painting under a French artist then living in London, went on riding trips through Gloucestershire near the Welsh border, and spent vacations at Brighton (where George IV had just built his fantasy out of the Arabian Nights, the Royal Pavilion). But still she was not completely happy. She had an intensely religious outlook; something, she felt, still escaped her. As she wrote in her diary on 2 July 1832: 'I feel impatient to be more useful — to be more entirely employed for the benefit of others.'

It would be difficult to imagine two more different backgrounds than those of Peter and Eliza. If Eliza's symbolized abundance, Peter's symbolized want. He was the son of a white surveyor, Augustus Jones, and an Indian woman; his birth-place in 1802 was a tipi overlooking Hamilton Bay. For his first fourteen years he lived with his mother's people, the Mississauga (as the white settlers termed the Ojibwa on the north shore of Lake Ontario). When his father finally took him from his mother's band in 1816 he could only 'understand a few simple words' in English. His entire childhood was spent wandering with the small band as they desperately searched for the ever-diminishing fish and game. Starvation was a constant threat, and in order to survive they had to sell baskets, brooms, and handicrafts to the white settlers. And as the Indians lacked a natural immunity to diseases like smallpox and measles (both foreign to North America before the European arrival), many perished in the frequent epidemics. Peter later wrote 'one half [of the children] die before reaching the period of youth.' He was fortunate just to have survived.

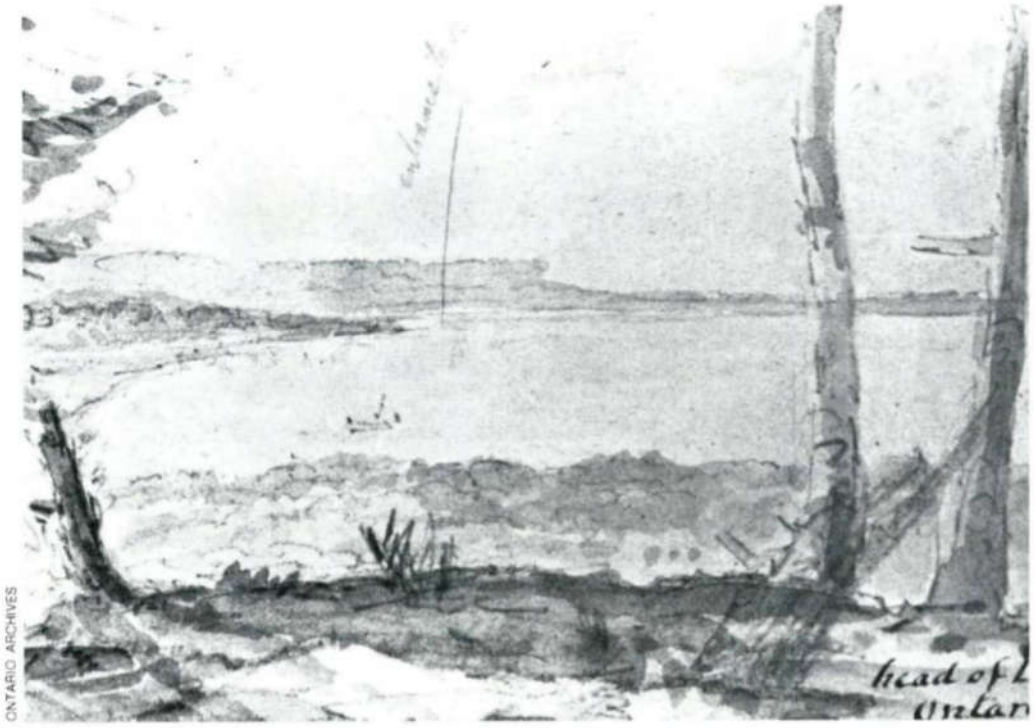
In 1816, fearing that the demoralized and rapidly declining Mississauga would soon be extinct, Peter's father took the boy to live with him and his 'second family' on the Grand River. It was on his father's farm that Peter learned English and the ways of the white man. Then, in 1823, the second major transformation in Peter's life took place — he was converted to Christianity. The next year, at the age of twenty-two, the young mixed-blood felt called to the Methodist ministry. Knowing both Indian and white cultures he felt that he might serve as a bridge between the two. And he did. By the late 1820s Peter had converted almost all of the Mississauga to Christianity and became well known as the leading native Methodist preacher in Upper Canada. In 1831 the Methodist Episcopal Church of Upper Canada, recognizing his talents, sent him to England to raise money for the support of the Canadian mission.

COURTESY OF LOUISE THORP, VANCOUVER

*'Holly Cottage', the Field's country home at Norwood. By Eliza's cousin, Ellen Field, 14 June 1833.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

*The medal presented to Kahkewaquonaby (Peter Jones) by King William IV in 1831. Below: A view of Windsor Castle from an oil painting by J. M. W. Turner c. 1829, close to the time of Peter Jones's audience there with King William IV and Queen Adelaide.*




ONTARIO ARCHIVES

*The 'Head of Lake Ontario', a water-colour by Mrs Simcoe completed in June 1796. Peter Jones grew up at the head of the lake — the site of present-day Hamilton, Ontario — during the first decade of the nineteenth century.*

The English tour was a complete success. Over the course of his year-long visit thousands were turned away. Many of the chapels simply were not large enough to admit all who wanted to hear a sermon preached by a North American Indian. He wrote back to his brother John on 30 December, after seven months in England: 'when my Indian name, Kahkewaquonaby, is announced to attend any public meeting, so great is the curiosity, the place is sure to be filled.' When Peter left England a year later he brought back over £1,000 for the support of the Methodist Indian missions in Upper Canada. During his year abroad he made over 150 addresses and sermons to different congregations throughout England.

The first weeks that he spent in England had been particularly difficult as he could not adjust to the dampness and humidity. In mid-May he became seriously ill in Bristol and under doctor's orders was confined to his room for seven weeks. But calamities sometimes bring good fortune, which happily was Peter's experience. During his confinement a young lady who was then visiting her sister in neighbouring Gloucester, called upon his hosts. Peter's diary entry for 24 June 1831 is simple: 'we had several visitors at Mr. Wood's this evening, among whom was Miss E. Field, of London, who gave me an invitation to visit her mother at Norwood.' After Peter had recovered and lectured throughout northern England, they would meet again at Norwood . . . and at Lambeth.

Unfortunately Eliza's diary for 1831 has not survived, and her first impressions of Peter are unknown. They were probably similar to those of the English press, which amply reported his lectures and sermons in the fall of 1831. After his talk in Sheffield, for example, the *Courant* wrote 'Kahkewaquonaby is a very fine looking man, apparently 30 years of age.' Peter's 'ability to speak English with tolerable fluency' and his 'gentle and unassuming' manner impressed the Liverpool *Courier*. When he spoke in Halifax the *Express* noted his 'great modesty and unaffected simplicity', and added that 'the subject of religion and the great objects of his mission, seem to engage his constant attention.' While Peter's appearance and his kind manner may have helped his cause, it would probably be his concern with 'religion and the great objects of his mission' that conquered the pious Eliza. And conquer he did — for once he arrived in London from the north he became a welcome guest at both residences of Charles Field.

In the early 1830s no country in the world could challenge England's wealth or her industrial supremacy. In London, Peter was at the centre of the richest and most powerful empire in the world. But despite the power and affluence surrounding him Peter did not have, by any means, the 'colonial's' sense of inferiority. His comments on the 'new Romans' fashion reveal his North American sentiments. Writing to his brother, John, he commented on the English women's bonnets which 'look something like a

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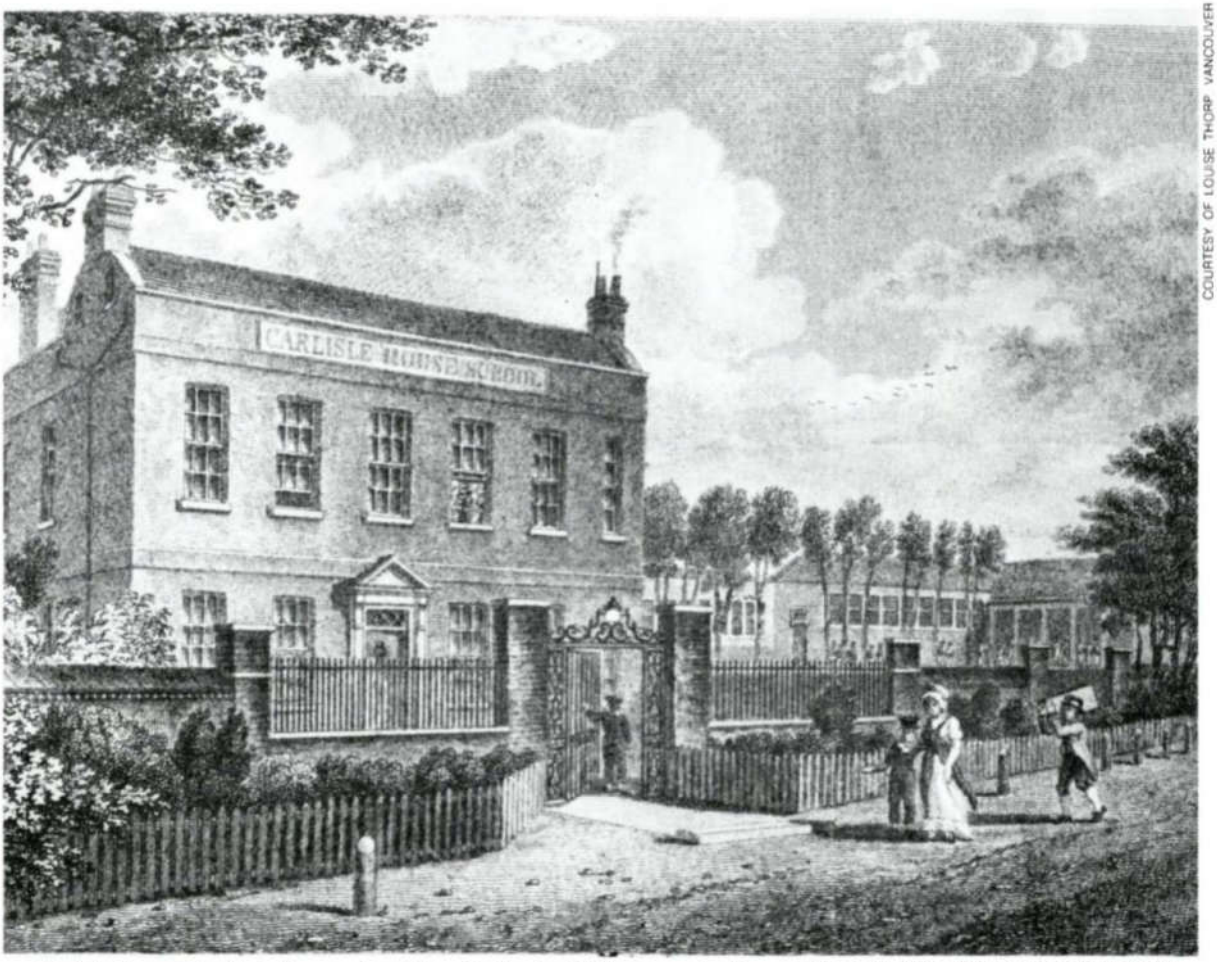
*Entry from Eliza's diary for 4 January 1832.*

farmer's scoop-shovel' and their 'sleeves as big as bushel bags, which make them appear as if they had three bodies with one head.' Significantly though, he then added, 'with all their big bonnets and sleeves, the English ladies, I think, are the best of women.' Well might he add that line for already he was falling in love with one. In Eliza's diary for 1833 she wrote under the date of 4 January 'Chippeway words: Geneshee kiss me, Kiminwanemin I love you.'

As Peter visited Eliza at Lambeth in the dark twilight of the English winter he must have thought of his home on the Credit River. Canada was constantly on his mind, for he continually compared the English and his own people in his letters home. On 30 December, for example, he wrote to John that to the Englishman roast beef 'is as sweet as bear's meat is to




COURTESY OF LOUISE THORP VANCOUVER

*'Carlisle House School'— 'where my dear father Mr Charles Field went to school . . . at the end of Royal Row where I was born'. The inscription was written by Eliza after her marriage.*

an old Indian hunter and plum-pudding to a beaver's tail.'

On many of their walks around Lambeth, Peter and Eliza must have passed the site of Charles Field's old school, Carlisle House, on Carlisle Lane, just a block from where Eliza had been born on Royal Row. While walking by, Eliza must have told her friend of the neighbourhood's scandal, the grisly murders of 1531. In that year the cook of the first Carlisle House (then the London residence of the Bishops of Rochester) poisoned seventeen members of the household as well as two of the neighbouring poor by adding poison to some yeast. As punishment, the cook was boiled to death — in oil.

Together Peter and Eliza toured 'tourists' London. Although he does not mention his companion by name it was probably with Eliza that Peter visited Westminster Abbey — only a short walk over the Westminster Bridge from the Fields' home in Lambeth Marsh. There they saw 'the place where the Kings of England are crowned, and the royal chairs that they sit on when they are crowned.' Just as they passed by, Peter's sense of fun came to the fore. Seized by a sudden urge, he later wrote in his diary, 'I took the liberty, to squat myself down upon them as we passed by, so that I can now say that I, a poor Indian from the woods of Canada, sat in the king's and queen's great crowning chairs.'

Events moved quickly in their relationship and by 1 February Eliza was already thinking of the contribution she could make to the Canadian mission work. 'Oh' she wrote 'that my God would deem me worthy to be employed in such a glorious work.' Then on 2 February she further confided in her diary, 'I feel as tho' I could lay open all my heart to the friend I love.' As his work in England would soon be over and he would have to sail shortly for Canada, Peter wanted to decide the question of marriage, and on Valentine's Day he proposed. Eliza's joy was complete — but her father's was not.

We know relatively little about Charles Field, apart from his overly-protective attitude towards his eldest daughter. When she was off riding in the country, he mentioned in at least one of his letters that she should take special pains to be careful. No doubt Charles's fears about Peter (a man whose religious zeal and whose spirit of sacrifice for his people Charles fully admired) stemmed from his anxiety about his income. Could the missionary, who earned less in a year than Charles did in a day, properly support his beloved daughter? It would take both Peter and Eliza a month to win her father over to their side. Finally in mid-March Charles yielded and reluctantly gave them his blessing.

All that spring Eliza trembled at the thought of what awaited her in Canada. The talents in demand on an Indian mission were domestic and Eliza, who had been

*Egerton Ryerson, Peter's good friend, who allayed the fears of Eliza's father in regard to the Reverend Peter Jones. From a photograph published in 1838 in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.*

surrounded by servants from childhood, had precious few of these. But she was eager to learn. That fall she visited a friend in the country 'to gain a little information in household concerns'. There Eliza watched her friend 'make pies and puddings and the servant making bread'. Then later that week she added 'my friend taught me how to knit shoes and a shawl stitch'.

To prepare herself for life in an Indian mission Eliza began to read widely. In her diary she recorded titles that she chose. In July she read the recently-published novel by J. Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and found it 'very interesting'. She also consulted church histories, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and travel accounts of North America. For a few days she struggled away with a history of Canada but found it (like how many thousands since) 'tamely written — with little incident and little information'.

During his last weeks in England Peter attended missionary society meetings in London, and preached sermons in various chapels on Sunday. Then he received an unexpected honour — an invitation arrived requesting the presence of the distinguished native missionary at Windsor Castle on 5 April. The

private audience with King William IV and Queen Adelaide was the high point of Peter's last month in England. The King talked with him for half an hour, and after the interview Peter was taken by several of the King's 'Lords' to a banquet hall where they dined on 'roasted chickens, beef, potatoes, tarts, wines etc., and ate out of silver dishes'. When he reported all to the Fields the next day old Charles must have been impressed. His only connection with the King was through trade. In the London directory for 1832 his firm 'J. C. and C. Field' advertised that they were 'Wax-chandlers and Bleachers to his Majesty' — they supplied him with his soap and candles.

But Eliza's problems were still not over. Even before Peter left England on 27 April her friends had voiced their opposition to her marriage to a North American Indian. As she noted in her diary on 25 April 'I feel such a weight of anxiety, many friends raise various objections and from every quarter they say — How can you think of giving up all.' Within the family her brother-in-law, the Reverend John Dowling of Gloucester, was the most violently opposed. 'J.D.' she wrote on 28 June 'looks on the affair with horror.' Then she hinted that it was the racial aspect of the marriage that upset him: 'I am sure prejudice and ignorance are causes of many of his objections.' Even her father was not truly reconciled to the idea. On 31 October he told her after dinner 'You do not mean to go, if you go you will break my heart.' Then a week later he openly forbade the match.

It was probably at this point that Charles Field learned more about Peter's father, Augustus Jones, who was still living. This proved quite a shock, for while Peter had never disguised the fact that his father was a white surveyor of Welsh descent, it is unlikely that he had made it clear that his father had two living wives — one Peter's own mother and the second his 'legal' wife. Once he learned of Augustus Jones's two wives, Charles Field began to suspect the character of Augustus's son. Only through the intervention of Robert Alder, the Wesleyan Methodist missionary superintendent, and Peter's friend, Egerton Ryerson (the future founder of the modern Ontario school system and the first white missionary at the Credit River Mission) — both of whom were then in England — were his fears allayed. Finally he again relented and Eliza recorded on 2 December 'altho' he cannot recommend it as a prudent step, he will no longer oppose.'

Eliza rejoiced. She went immediately to Norwood, and in her diary recorded her joy at finding 'the hedges now clothed with the lovely foliage of spring and the

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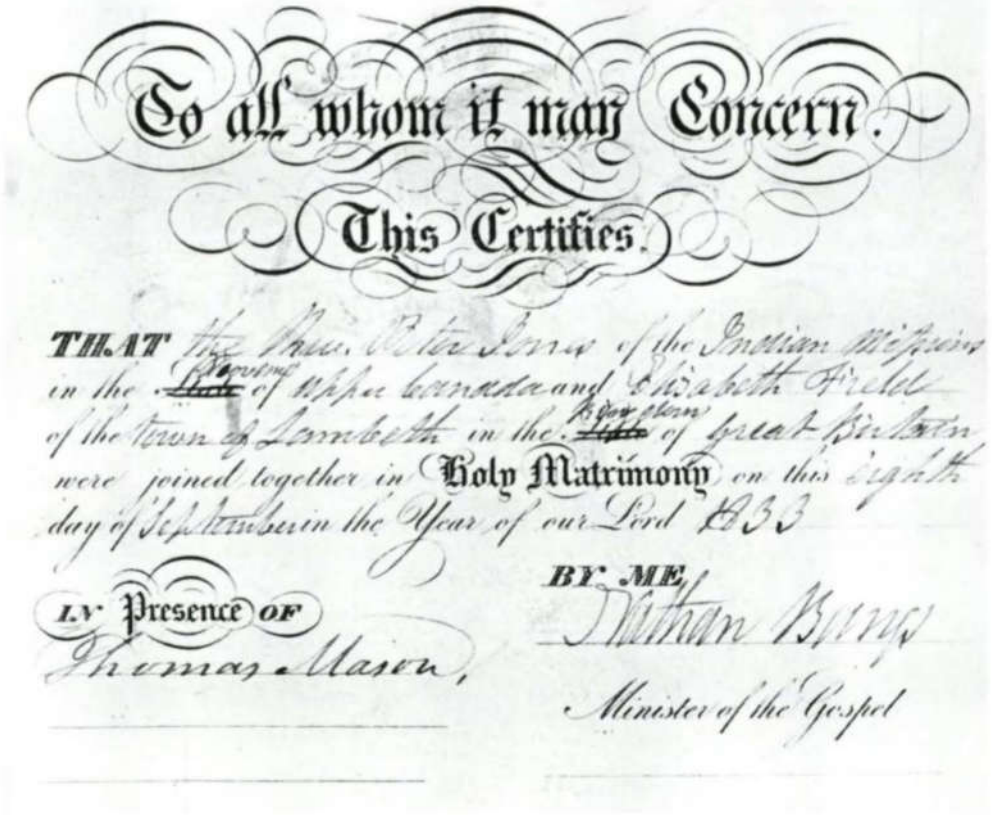


To all whom it may Concern.

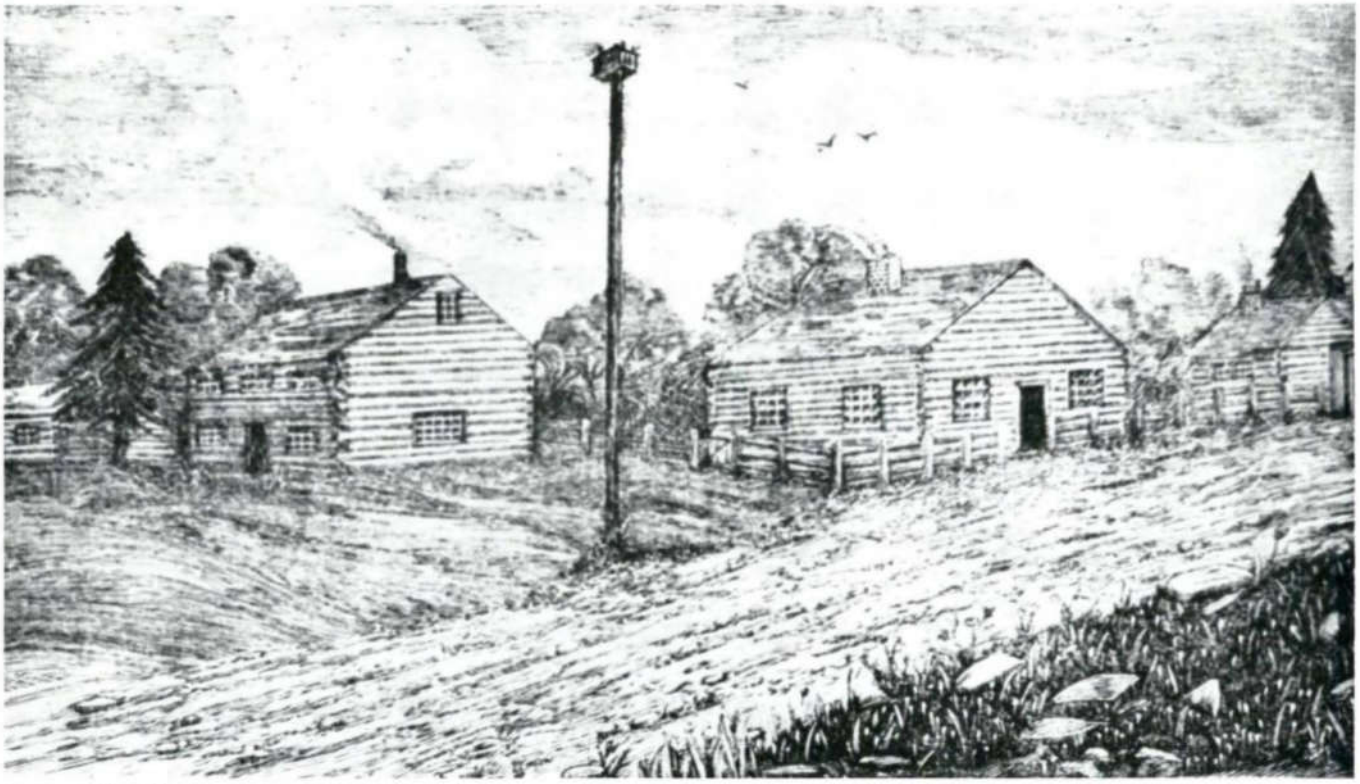
This Certifies.

THAT the Rev. Peter Jones of the Indian Mission in the ~~Province~~ of Upper Canada and Elizabeth Field of the Town of Lambeth in the ~~County~~ Kingdom of Great Britain were joined together in Holy Matrimony on this Eighth day of September in the Year of our Lord 1833

IN Presence OF
Thomas Mason,

BY ME,
William Byng
Minister of the Gospel

*Marriage certificate of Peter and Eliza Jones.*



*Peter and Eliza's first home in Canada, in Eliza's words, was 'one room, which my dear husband called his study'. It is the tiny log cabin on the extreme right. The sketch of the Port Credit mission 13 miles west of York (Toronto) was done by Eliza. The other buildings, from the left, are the school, council house and church.*

trees covered with blossoms.' All summer long she prepared for her departure. After a reunion of the entire family at Norwood, Eliza left for Liverpool on 5 August. On the following day she and Egerton Ryerson boarded the sailing ship *United States* bound for New York. Her father Charles, hoping to ease her transition to Peter's log cabin, sent his daughter off with fine English bone china and rich Persian rugs.

Charles Field's doubts were justified. His daughter did indeed have little experience in the 'real' world, and would have to submit to many trials as the wife of an impoverished missionary. But she wanted to be 'useful' and not spend her life in idleness. On the very day of her marriage to Peter she recorded her wish: 'may I tho' a poor weak unworthy creature be made very useful, this is my desire and this is my prayer.'

Eliza's adjustment was extremely hard, and the transition of the refined Englishwoman to frontier Upper Canada was not easily made. She persevered, however, and loyally supported her husband. At his mission postings at the Credit River and later Muncey Town (near London, Ontario), she cheerfully taught the Indian girls sewing (a skill she had but recently learned herself), instructed them in religion, and assisted in copying out in her fine hand her husband's translation of the Bible. With determination she strove to adjust to the new land, and came to love it. Her union with Peter was total and after his death their mutual friend, Egerton Ryerson, would write 'I question whether a happier marriage than theirs, on both sides, was ever experienced — truly in life they were of one heart.'

Many friends and relatives both in England and Canada had been skeptical about the success of the marriage, and had strongly voiced their disapproval. But Eliza, at the time of her marriage and after, paid them no heed. After Peter died in 1856 she would recall 'the fearful forebodings, and the cruel things that were written and said'. Then and now, she added, she 'looked with pity on those who from ignorance and prejudice viewed the alliance with contempt; deeming them not worthy to tread in the shadow of my honoured husband.'

A quotation from one of Peter's final letters to Eliza in England opened this essay. 'Many white settlers' the native missionary began 'think it is not right for the whites to intermarry with Indians.' Then he continued 'Now if this doctrine be true, what must we poor fellows do who in the order of God's providence are brought to be united in heart to those of a whiter hue . . . In my opinion character alone ought to be the distinguishing mark in all countries, and among all people.' In an age when racial prejudices are still very much alive, Eliza's courage in making 'character alone the distinguishing mark' deserves to be remembered. ◆

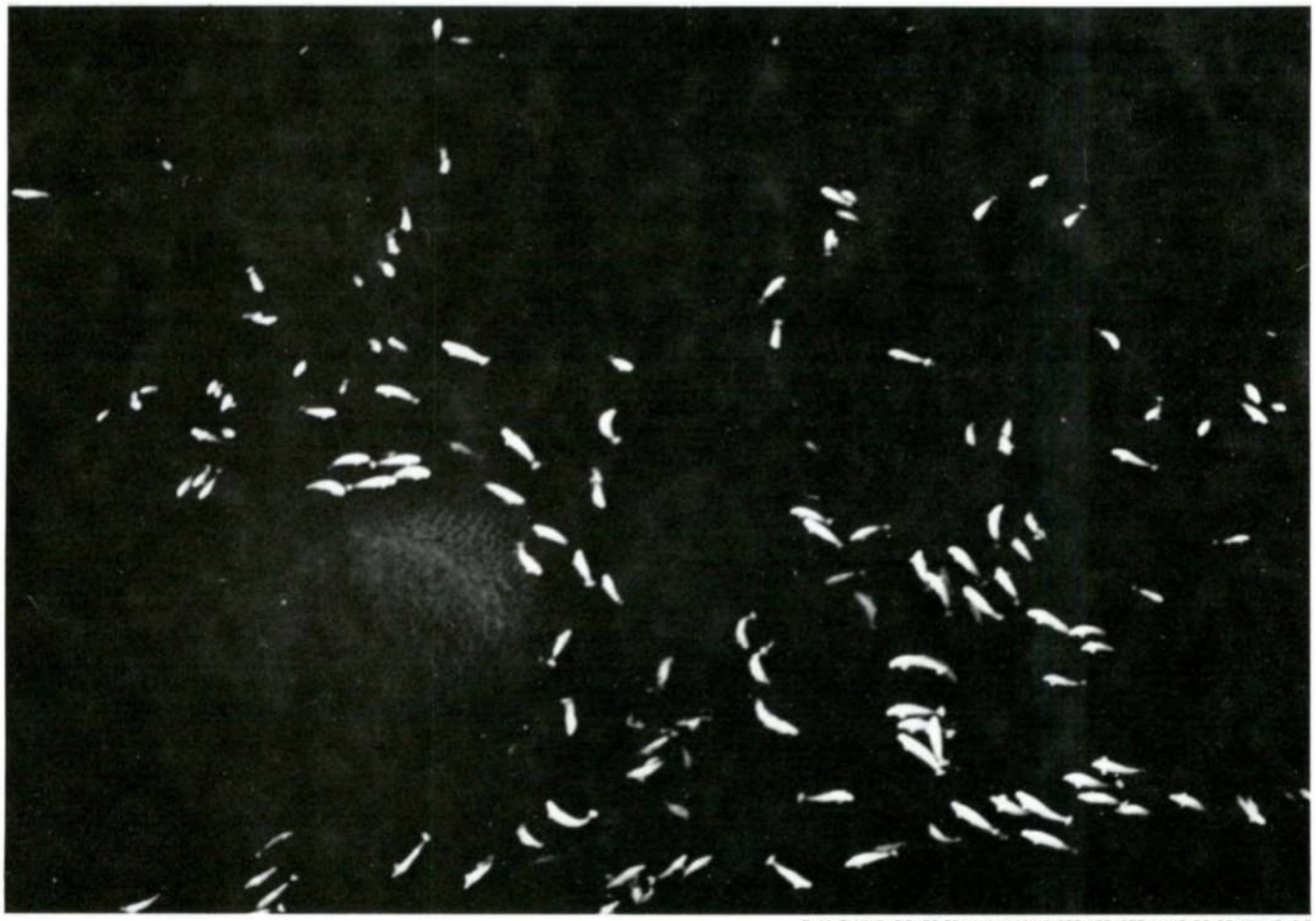
# Whaling on the Eastmain

**By Daniel Francis**

*Daniel Francis, an MA in Canadian Studies, is with James Bay History Project funded by the Service d'Archeologie et Ethnologie, Ministère des affaires culturelles, Québec.*

*Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Cultural Affairs Ministry of the Québec government for permission to publish this article and to the Hudson's Bay Company for permission to quote from its Archives.*

*White whales attracted the Company's interest in the early 1750s following the establishment of Richmond Fort on the Richmond Gulf.*



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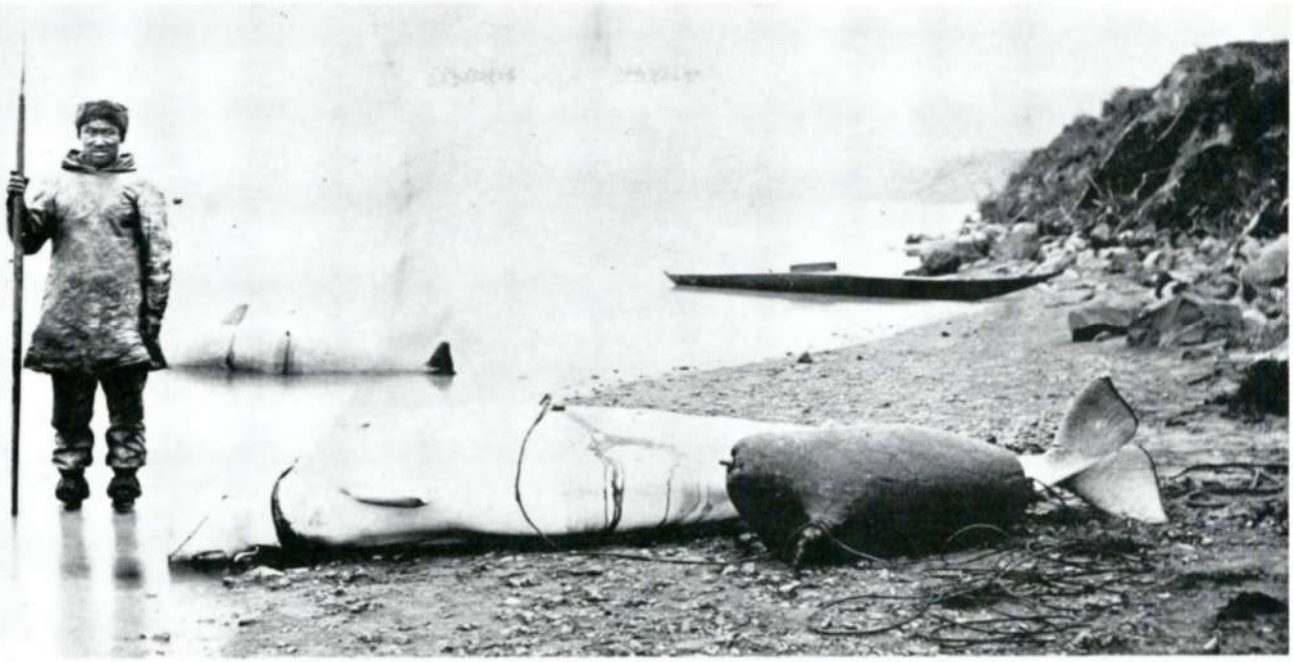


PAC

*An Eskimo, probably employed at the Company's fishery when his photograph was taken by George Simpson McTavish in 1865 at Little Whale River. Young Chief Trader McTavish came to the settlement in 1862 to serve his apprenticeship with the fishery.*

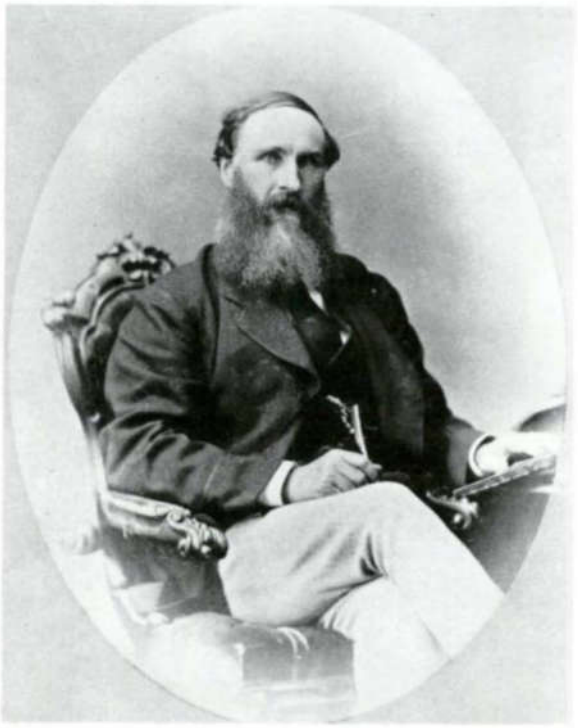
IN AUGUST 1852, Governor George Simpson wrote his superiors at Hudson's Bay Company headquarters in London: 'You may fancy me over-sanguine, perhaps, but I have no hesitation in stating my opinion that, for some years to come, the porpoise fisheries of the Bay will be more valuable than the present beaver trade of the whole country.'

This astonishing prediction was prompted by the first results of an experiment Simpson had initiated that summer at the Whale Rivers on the east coast of Hudson Bay. Encouraged by the success of the Company's white whale, or 'porpoise', fishery in the St Lawrence, Simpson had sent north an expedition to study the possibility of establishing similar operations in the Bay. Robert Hamilton, postmaster at Abitibi and a member of the expedition, reported that at the Great and Little Whale Rivers whales were seen by the thousands, whales enough to walk on. Furthermore, local Indians told of similar herds farther north in Richmond Gulf and at the 'Nistabucky' River. All signs pointed to a profitable extension of the Company's trade and Simpson allowed full rein to his imagination.

Whaling was not a new activity on the Eastmain, either for the Indians or the Company. For the former it almost certainly was a traditional summer pastime, a source of food for feasting and a winter's supply of oil. High season for whaling was the period in July and August when the animals ascended the rivers in search of fish. The hunt consisted of noisily driving the whales downriver into a line of canoes strung across the river's mouth, or into shallows where they could more easily be harpooned. The beluga is a small whale, seldom exceeding sixteen feet in length, but the chase could still be a dangerous one. Records indicate that a good day's catch numbered about five whales, but there were few good days.

The Company's first whaling venture on the Eastmain followed the establishment of Richmond Fort on Richmond Gulf in 1750. A summer fishery was organized at Little Whale River using Indian manpower and methods but even when the trading post was removed to the spot and a net employed, the operation enjoyed limited success and ended with the abandonment of the post in 1759. Two subsequent attempts to establish posts at one or other of the Whale Rivers failed and though late in the eighteenth century the Company did begin sending a sloop north to Great Whale River each summer, these were essentially trading voyages; the Indians still did the actual whaling. Simpson's intentions, however, were more elaborate.

The expedition of 1852 was led by a man named Belanger, an experienced whaler from the St Lawrence River who entered into a profit-sharing arrangement with the Company to supervise the Eastmain whale fishery. Belanger, as well as Simpson, hoped that a number of separate operations would eventually be established throughout the Bay, but initially they agreed that the Little Whale River was the most promising location. This river was not as wide or as deep as the Great Whale River, nor had it as strong a



*Chief Factor Robert Hamilton.*

current, and these considerations were important since nets were to be used to trap the whales. During the winter of 1852-3 Belanger and Simpson conferred at Lachine and agreed on the details of the next summer's operation. The French-Canadian was to be assisted by Robert Hamilton and a crew of twelve Company servants. Additional manpower would be provided on the spot by hiring local natives as needed. Another dwelling house would have to be built at Little Whale River, where a fur-trade post and an oil house in which to boil the blubber had just recently been established. It was agreed that six furnaces would be built, and bricks and ironwork for these had to be imported. Fuel and building materials were a special problem in the northern area, where the wood supply consisted primarily of stunted spruce and driftwood. It was planned to obtain lumber for building from the Fort George area but Simpson recognized the need to import coal from England to fuel the furnaces. Lastly, large numbers of barrels were required in which to store and ship the oil. Once again scarce resources made it impossible to obtain the wood for staves locally and these too had to be imported, and a cooperage established at the river.

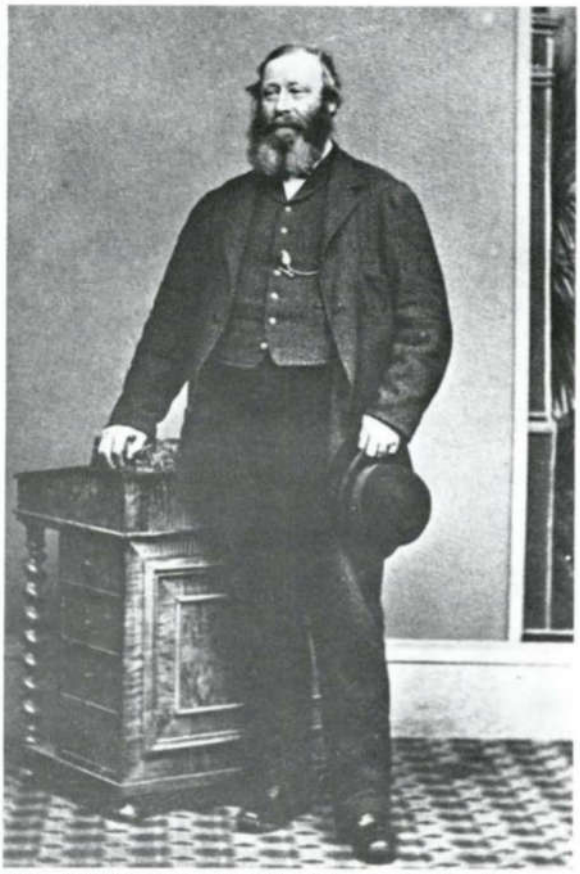
It was an expensive undertaking and during the summer Simpson awaited news of its success with high hopes. He was destined, however, to be disappointed. In September Hamilton wrote to the Governor to inform him that bad management and bad weather had combined to make the inaugural year a complete failure. Belanger and his party had not arrived back at Little Whale River from Canada until 24 July. Up until that time the river had been heavily populated with whales but with the arrival of the schooner the animals departed. (Hamilton speculated that the noise of unloading the boat had frightened them.) Seeing no purpose in waiting idly for their return, Belanger set off for Richmond Gulf to investigate the possibilities of a whaling operation there. While he was absent, the whales returned. The upshot was that it was 24 August before the nets were placed in the river for the first time. Unfortunately, heavy rain and strong winds blew up almost immediately, driving off the whales and making their capture impossible. Thus the season of 1853 drew to an unsatisfactory close.

In his report to Simpson, Hamilton made it clear that he held Belanger, not the elements, responsible for the failure. He said that the Frenchman lacked the necessary initiative and leadership qualities and even reported that Belanger intended cheating the Company. For his part, Belanger complained to Simpson that Hamilton was an interfering man of little talent.

Despite this false and acrimonious start, the Governor refused to be discouraged. He wrote: 'I am not inclined to regard the result of this season's operations as a failure, on the contrary the great number of porpoises seen in the River in July and August is confirmation of former reports.' Simpson remained convinced — at least he told his London superiors he was convinced — that once the whaling operation got established it would prove very profitable. He agreed that the extension of the business to Great Whale River the next summer, as planned, should be postponed while all energies and money were concentrated on Little Whale River. As for the feuding among his servants, Simpson endorsed Belanger ('I have much confidence in Mr. Belanger who I believe is a well-intentioned, intelligent person thoroughly conversant with his business') but did not remove Hamilton.

The breach between these two found its own tragic solution that fall. On 18 October Belanger and another man were lost when their small open boat capsized in heavy seas at the mouth of the Little Whale River. Belanger's battered corpse was found two days later washed up on the coast. Simpson had placed a great deal of faith in Belanger's expertise and his death was a major set-back. It was out of the question, however, to abandon the whaling operation, and a competent successor had to be found to take charge of the fishery. Initially the Governor chose Robert Hamilton, who by now had had two seasons of experience. Then in the spring of 1854 he reconsidered and instead appointed James Anderson who was Chief Trader in charge of the King's Posts on the north bank of the St Lawrence River.

*Two years after the Company's whaling operation ended at Little Whale River, Chief Factor James L. Cotter took these extraordinary photographs of the settlement, using the primitive wet plate method.*



*James Anderson who managed the fisheries at Little and Great Whale River with moderate success, until the belugas became wary of the area.*

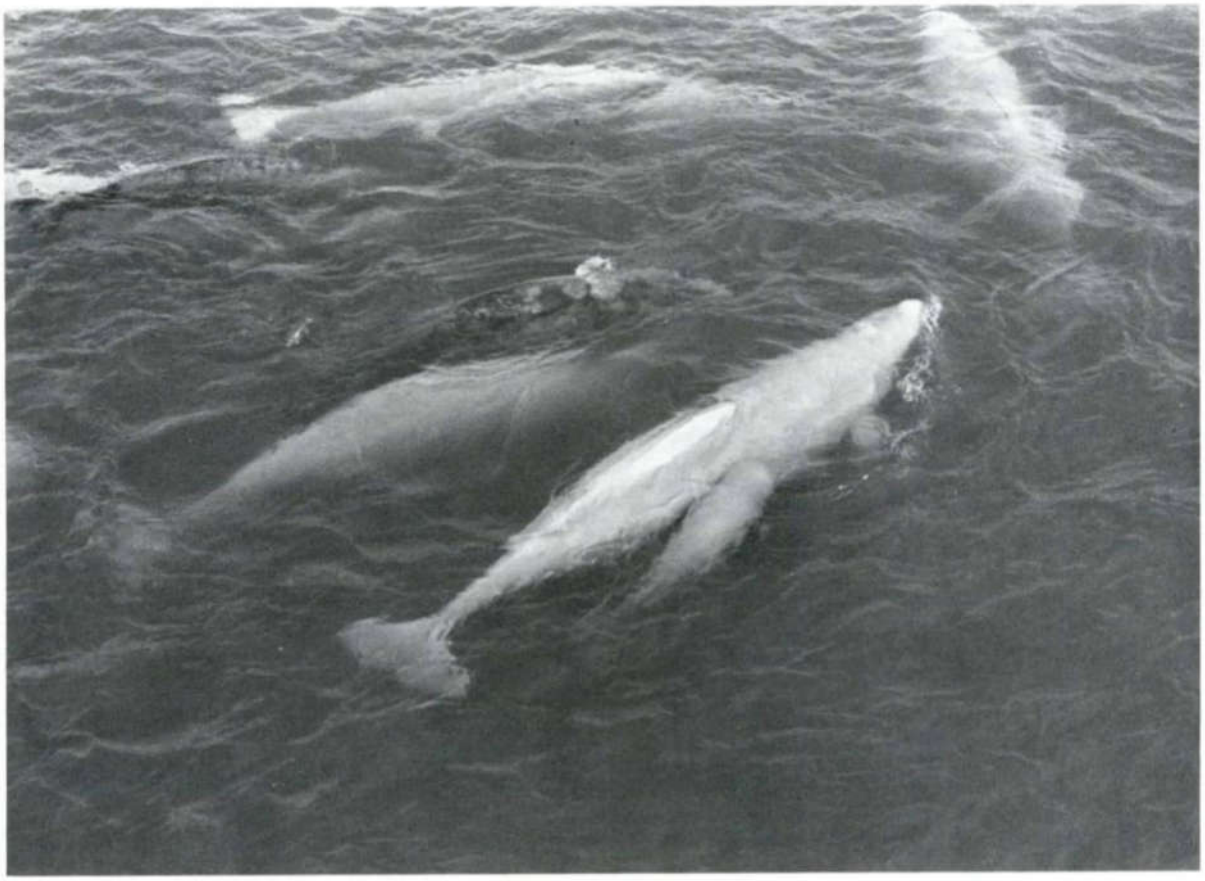
Under Anderson's management the whaling enterprise enjoyed a moderate success. New buildings were constructed, and the number of whales killed gradually increased from 423 in 1854 to 743 in 1856. A separate operation was begun at Great Whale River in 1857 and there, 1,043 whales were taken. But such a modest extension of the trade was certainly not what Simpson had envisioned when he had predicted the 'white porpoise' would surpass the beaver as the Company's most profitable resource. And in fact, even such limited success did not last long. After two disastrous seasons at Little Whale River when the whales refused to enter the river at all, Anderson dejectedly wrote to the Governor in 1859: 'I may as well mention that I do not think it probable that larger catches of Porpoise in one season will ever be made at the Whale Rivers than have already been taken.'

The Reverend John Horden, then an Anglican missionary based at Moose Factory, visited the area in the summer of 1858 and left the best description on record of how whaling was conducted by the Hudson's Bay Company at the mouths of the Whale Rivers. The most important piece of equipment was the barrier net: a long net strung across the mouth of the river, attached by ropes to anchors and allowed to sink. The whales entered the river over the barrier on a high tide and when it was determined that a large number were above the net it was raised, buoyed up by kegs, and the animals were trapped. Now a second net, called a pond net, was brought into play. This was a smaller, circular trap, a part of which was sunken to allow the whales to enter freely. Once it had been placed in the river, the 'drive' began. The Reverend Horden took part in one of these drives and described it.

> Thirty-seven canoes and five boats were engaged in it. Some canoes were first sent a little way up the river to drive the whales down; we then gradually hemmed them in and drove a large number into the "pond net," the mouth of which was instantly raised and 300 were confined within; these were at once shot and drawn ashore.

Once ashore, the skin and blubber were removed with sharp flensing knives and carried to the oil house. Any meat on the carcass was taken by the Indian employees for their families or used as feed for the sled dogs. (In 1858 Horden counted one hundred Indian families attending the whaling at Great Whale River but at Little Whale River there were only twenty Indian and a number of Eskimo families.) At the oil house the blubber was removed from the skin, cut up into small pieces and put in kettles to be boiled down into oil. When ready, the oil was pumped from the kettles into barrels in which it was shipped to England for use primarily as a lighting fuel. The whale skins were cleaned and salted. Some were used to package furs at other Company posts but the rest were sent to Europe where whale-skin was used as a leather substitute.

Governor Simpson did not live to see the disappointing end to his experiment in whaling.



R. McCLUNG, FISHERIES AND MARINE SERVICE, STE-ANNE DE BELLEVUE, P.Q.

*White whales near Somerset Island: adults, juveniles, and a neonate in the foreground.*

Actually, the year he died, 1860, was the best season in the short history of the enterprise. At Little Whale River over 1,500 whales were killed and at Great Whale River another 800. But such success did not continue. Throughout the next decade the number of animals taken rapidly declined until in 1869 it was decided to stop whaling Great Whale River in the hope that the whales, which had almost abandoned the river, would return. For the same reason whaling ended at Little Whale the next year.

Any attempt to explain the failure of the Eastmain 'porpoise fishery' must take into account its northerly geographic location. Aside from the additional expense this incurred in the form of shipping costs and imported fuel, the inhospitable climate of the Whale Rivers presented a series of difficulties to the actual whaling operation. When spring came late and the ice was slow to leave the coast, the arrival of the whales was delayed. Heavy winds blowing in off the bay and frequent storms of rain, sometimes even summer snow, made the placing of the nets dangerous, when not impossible. Furthermore, rain-storms tended to stir up the rivers, filling them with mud which made it difficult to determine if any whales were in the river or, if there were, to drive them into the nets. Lastly, it was only at high tide that the animals swam up the river and when this happened at night watchers could not see whether the whales were above the net or not. The whaling season was brief and had to be exploited intensively. Yet any one of the above conditions would keep the whalers idle for days at a time.

The climate made it difficult to operate the fishery; the whales themselves made it impossible. Quite simply, they stopped entering the rivers. It is possible their numbers may have been depleted, but more probable, as the whalers themselves complained, that the animals had become shy and conscious of the danger. Often they did not venture beyond the barrier during the whaling season but no sooner had the Company's equipment been stowed away for the winter than the animals were as numerous as ever in the rivers. Whatever the reason, the whales began to avoid the Whale Rivers and this was fatal to the Company's interest. Unlike Indian whaling, which was a chase, the Company's operation was stationary and land-based. It depended upon the regular arrival of the whales. When the animals' habits changed, the Company was powerless to react. It could do nothing but fold its nets and close its establishments. ◆

# *Early Days in the Shiny House*

***By Ruth Humphrys***

*The story of one family's life in the settlement of Cannington Manor, Saskatchewan, from their arrival in 1888 to the death of James Humphrys in 1903. A continuation of 'The Shiny House' published Spring 1977, and based on letters and written recollections still in possession of the Humphrys family. The author is the wife of E. W. Humphrys, a grandson of James.*

ON AN OCTOBER DAY in 1888 Ernest, the eighteen-year-old son of James and Jenny Humphrys, hitched up the buckskin ponies to the carriage, and with the farm-hands driving the wagons, set out from 'The Shiny House' to meet his father and mother arriving on the Canadian Pacific Railway train at Moosomin station. James had returned to England the previous August to wind up his affairs and bring his wife, their other nine children whose ages ranged from one to seventeen, and 'their dear faithful nanny', to Cannington Manor and the fine spacious house he had built for them.

Now the great day had come. The big family was re-united and about to start on a splendid adventure in a new land. With their trunks and cases and miscellaneous bundles around them they set forth on the winding, forty-mile trail to their new home. One of the teen-aged boys recalled that it was a hard journey:

*A prairie fire threatened the Humphrys' home in the spring of 1892. The danger was averted by ploughing a fireguard, as in this illustration by Inglis Sheldon-Williams. The artist arrived in Cannington Manor the same year as the Humphrys family. His drawings were published in London's 'Sphere' and 'Daily Graphic'.*

'one of the horses on one of the wagons played out coming out'. One wonders what the gently-reared Jenny, then 40 years of age, thought as she was jostled and bumped hour after hour over the rough trail. Did she share her husband's optimism and high enthusiasm or did she feel some quiet misgivings? What did she think when they came to the Little and Big Pipestone Crossings? Old-timers used to vie with each other in describing their hazardous experiences at these creeks. Every wagon-load had to be lightened, and trunks, furniture, machinery, stock, children — whatever they were freighting — either toted or hauled up and down the steep banks; then the teams were 'doubled up', and the men, struggling and slipping back, heaving, pushing and cursing, gained the opposite side. When everything was re-loaded, they pushed on to the next crossing, and the back-breaking operation was repeated. Jenny's first experience on the trails of the prairies must have given her some twinges of doubt.

She had left behind in England her mother, close and dear relations and friends, the amenities of comfortable urban living with its concerts and theatres, and the social rounds that were so much a part of a well-to-do Victorian lady's daily life. The children had been taken out of good schools. Mary, the eldest daughter, had come straight from Stuttgart where she had been studying art and music, to sail with her family from Liverpool. What were their impressions when they saw the big square house standing bare and unfinished with no garden or shrubbery to soften its lines? There were no nearby houses and no roads as they knew them, nothing but the endless rolling prairie with here and there a glade of small trees, and in the distance, Moose Mountain.

Jenny's introduction to her new house was not auspicious and must have done little to allay any doubts she may have had. Her son, Billy, described their arrival: 'The house was more or less up when the old man brought us out on October 13th. Only one door was hung in the whole house, no window casings, windows tacked in, floor half laid. Mother's first action in the house was to find a safe place to put a special barometer-thermometer which had been kept upright all the way from England. She opened the one door thinking it was a cupboard, and fell down, plump! into the cellar. She was insensible about an hour . . . . There was practically no snow that first winter. So, no water. Frank and I used to go to the Mountain and haul ice . . . spent the whole winter hauling wood and ice.' The wonderful furnace turned out to be an insatiable monster. It took a full cordwood stick and the high-ceilinged, uninsulated house with those 'tacked in windows' was cold. 'For variety' Billy added drily 'we made a few trips to Moosomin.' A trip to Moosomin was no pleasure jaunt. Billy talked about one trip when he and Frank met one of the neighbours struggling to get himself and two boys over the infamous Big Pipestone. 'Horses stopped, lost their footing and slid over the bank, wagon, horses, boys, whole load . . . into the creek. It was high . . . smashed the wagon.' Presumably they rescued the people and animals. Billy did not say.

They were a hardy, resourceful family and like the settlers there before them, they adapted to the rigours of pioneer life and set themselves the tasks of learning to farm and contributing their talents and their labours to the life of the community. There was no school when they arrived and it fell to Mary, the oldest daughter, to coach her younger brothers and sisters. Later the vicar, the Reverend H. B. Cartwright, tutored them until the school was established. Mary remembered him as being 'such a great man, physically, mentally, and spiritually. But he was a hopeless housekeeper and took a long time to get used to "batching". Once he was discovered preparing for his supper a jack-rabbit someone had given him and he was endeavouring patiently to pluck it.'

When the schoolhouse was built and a teacher hired, the children drove a mile and a half into the village. Later when the youngest daughter was sent to Havergal College in Toronto she was asked how she managed to make the change from the prairie schoolhouse, and she replied 'Why, just to sit at the table with Papa was an education in itself.'

James took much pleasure in instructing his children. He and Jenny were both keenly interested in astronomy and used to study the charts of the heavens. Another daughter said that for a long time, as a child, she thought the Lord's Prayer opened 'Our Father who chart in heaven.'

The children learned about their new country and the political scene in Ottawa from their father. He was fiercely opposed to protective tariff, and spoke with eloquence and passion against it to any audience or individual who would listen. When he learned that George Foster, the Minister of Finance, was coming west to sound out the political feeling on the prairies he went to Moosomin to meet him and set forth his views. Mr Foster heard him out and then asked just how he would propose to raise the necessary revenue. James felt he had bested him when he said firmly 'That, sir, is the business of the Minister of Finance.'

Another deep interest was the church. James and Jenny were devout Anglicans and it must have been a delight to them to attend their place of worship, the exquisite little Church of All Saints. When Cannington Manor was established, the church was the first building to be completed, and it is today the only original building still on the village site, a memorial to its first parishioners. The raising bee was held in June of 1884. With energy, skill, and love, the people of the area built the small cruciform church with gothic windows, a tower, and a belfry. A year later the first Bishop of Qu'Appelle, the Right Reverend A. J. R. Ansom, came to the village to

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

*The interior of a bachelor's shack: a sepia sketch by Mary Humphrys, who was studying art and music in Stuttgart when her father decided to move his family to the English pioneer community of Cannington Manor.*

conduct the service of consecration. Thanks in part to donations from England and the industry and gifts of time, materials, and money from the parishioners, the church was free of debt. Inside, it was as fine and complete as the beautiful country churches of England, so well remembered by most of the settlers. A pierced brass chandelier holding three lamps, hung from the hand-hewn polished beams, and fine brass gleamed on the carved altar. Pews, choir stalls, bishop's chair, communion table and organ, all were there in their rightful places. The women of the parish had worked the fine altar cloths, the sanctuary carpet, and kneeling pads. One member gave a silver trophy won at school to be used as a communion cup, another donated the font, and later a cross and paten were sent by a bishop in England in memory of his son, a settler who had died in a blizzard.

Here in the church James and Ernest found relaxation and an outlet for their musical talents. At one time Ernest was the organist and choirmaster and every Friday night he hitched up a wagon, and to make sure his choristers attended, called for them and drove them to choir practice. For one Easter service James took a hand in the church music and trained and conducted the choir in a full oratorio.

Soon after his arrival in the spring of 1888 James had been appointed lay reader and had received a licence from the bishop which allowed him to take the service when the parson was absent. This duty seemed to afford him much satisfaction and one parishioner, recalling her childhood days in the community wrote 'I can still see Mr. Humphrys, bearded, reading the lessons in round sonorous tones. I remember when I had my reading lessons with my Mother I used to try to imitate him and was always reproved, albeit with a smile.'

But there was one occasion in the history of the church when James was sorry to have to take the service. Daughter Mary was there and wrote: 'One Easter when we were without a Parson, the Bishop was to come down from Moosomin to take the services. It was of course in April when the thaw had started and the trails were very bad. Great preparations were made for the festival and the visit of the Bishop, even sending to Winnipeg for Easter lilies. Well, a large congregation gathered and waited in vain until about noon when we gave up hope. My Father read the service and we sang chants and Easter hymns, and then all returned home, a very disappointed and hurt people. We heard later that the Bishop didn't fancy the

long cold drive on the slushy trails, but some freighters had managed to get through about that time so we thought the Bishop might have made it too. An indignant church committee passed a vote of censure on him which much amused him. He said it was the first time he had known such an action to be passed on a Bishop. However, he made amends by coming the following Sunday and was very apologetic.' Someone once described the old Canningtonians as a proud and independent lot.

The interest of father and son in music went beyond the church services. Ernest organized and directed a very successful 'Toy Symphony' which sometimes played at the evenings of entertainment which were held in the town hall. James was always ready to sing a song or play his magnificent gold flute; a grandson recalls that he had been known in musical circles as one of the finest flautists in England. He organized and trained a successful glee club of thirty members who met at each other's houses and occasionally gave concerts in the schoolhouse to raise funds for some charitable purpose. Although the entertainment was all homegrown it seems to have been of a reasonably high standard. There were a number of talented musicians in the community, and there seems to have been no reluctance on the part of anyone to take part in the concerts and occasional plays. Even the much-loved Doctor Hardy was pressed into service and the story is told that he was always given the part of the villain because he never had time to learn his lines but so relished the role of 'the heavy' that he ad libbed with conviction, although sometimes to the discomfiture of the rest of the cast. At one entertainment someone sang a topical song 'I'm Too Young To Know' complete with local references, designed then, as now, as a surefire way of keeping the audience laughing. This was written by the village's only poet, a sometime stage-coach driver in the district named Bertram Tennyson, nephew of the Poet Laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson.

From the *Manitoba Free Press* of 1 August 1892 we have this account of one of the entertainments:

A concert and miscellaneous entertainment was given in the Town Hall under the auspices of the Ladies' Guild, which was a great success and much appreciated by a densely packed audience.

The novel feature of the entertainment was a band, called by some, The Cannington Manor Lunatic Band, under the leadership of Mr. Hanson, composed of piano, violin, banjoes, tom-toms, bones, triangle, and last but by no means least, "musical combs." The effect of this combination of instruments was surprisingly fine and loudly applauded. Songs were sung by Mr. Dobie and Mr. Scaife, and Mr. Campbell sang the swing song "See-Saw" which was arranged as a tableau, and illuminated by limelight, the band playing softly in the meantime. Mr. Scaife, Mr. Campbell, and Miss Rumboldt "The Three Young Maids of Lee" were with difficulty recognized in their new "old" role, so thoroughly had their transformation been completed, and so good was their acting. Songs were also sung by Messrs. Humphrys, Greenwood and Joyce. There followed a very amusing farce entitled "A Silent Woman", the parts of which were ably sustained by Mrs. Scaife, Allen Troughton, and Dr. Hardy.

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

*The Humphrys home, built in 1888, still stands today.*

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

*An ox-cart on the street of Cannington Manor c. 1888. In the background is the Church of All Saints.*

*'Didsbury', home of the wealthy Beckton Brothers whose stable of thoroughbreds was known throughout Canada and the United States. The Becktons left Cannington in 1897.*

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

*Members of the Cannington Manor Hunt Club gather at the home of Dr Hardy.*

The entertainment concluded with an exhibition of mesmerism by "Professor Kennedy" (A. Scaife) "who came expressly from New York for the purpose." This kept everyone in roars of laughter till the close, when everybody departed saying they had had a great deal more than their money's worth.

Frequently the evening entertainment was the wind-up to a day of sports. We have James's description of the preparations for one such event. 'They [the people generally] are very busy in the village making preparations for the forthcoming sports and entertainment. We are fitting two large ventilators to the town hall and will also have the lower halves of the window opening fitted with mosquito netting so I hope the room will be very much cooler and more comfortable and healthy than hitherto. Ernest as usual is head cook and will fix the stage, play the piano, etc. etc. I am to sing two or three songs for them. I have raked out a comic song about which only Ernest and I know anything. It is called 'A Horrible Tale'. I shall not rehearse it or say anything to the other performers about it, but come out with it on the night of the performance. The lawn tennis tournament commences today and will last all week. I believe there will be a great crowd of people to the races but I take no interest in that part of the business.'

To most people the annual race meeting of the Cannington Manor Racing Association was the gala event of the year. The Beckton brothers of the settlement were importers and breeders of thoroughbreds and their fine stable was known throughout Canada and the United States and attracted people from long distances. Some of the young men arrived on horseback, others with their families bounced over the bone-breaking trails in wagons and Red-River carts. They camped en route when necessary, and on arrival joined the big camp, prepared to spend the week in visiting and merry-making. It was a colourful occasion. The Indian families came in from the nearby reservation to watch their young men race their ponies, and improbable as it may seem, the French counts who had settled in Whitewood arrived in a four-in-hand coach with footmen in livery complete with top hats and cockades. The race track with its grandstand and judges' stand was considered one of the best on the western circuit and attracted entries from Calgary to Winnipeg. The steeplechase course had a sod and brush jump five feet high and a water jump fourteen feet in width which few competitors managed to clear. Everything was conducted according to racing regulations even to having the jockeys in their silks weighed in before mounting, by the clerk of the course. The final dash of colour was added by the Royal North West Mounted Police in their red tunics, on hand to keep order.

The festivities went on long into the night. A crowd always gathered to watch the Indians who held their pow-wow in the village street outside the Moose Mountain Trading Store. A dog (preferably a white one) was boiled for their feast, and the beat of their tom-toms could be heard for miles across the prairie.

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

*A tennis party at the home of Ernest Maltby (seated, centre) who married Mary Humphrys. Next (right) is Bertram Tennyson, nephew of the Poet Laureate of England. James Humphrys is in the back row, fourth from the right, with his wife Jenny who stands to the left.*

The owners of the big houses gave parties. Jenny mentioned in a letter, 'We generally had a dance in our house besides putting up guests.'

With fine horses in the district and a wide interest in racing it was natural that the cry of 'view halloo' rang out often across the prairie. There were plenty of foxes, and hounds from two well-known packs had been imported from England. Sometimes a few ladies of the community joined the hunt, always riding side-saddle. Of course a hunt club was reason enough to have an annual hunt ball. This was a formal affair, one of the few occasions when the ladies could wear the lovely ball gowns they had brought from England. Printed dance programs were ordered from Winnipeg and the scene in the town hall was as brilliant as fine silks and jewels, white gloves and fluttering fans could make it.

For the non-horsy set there was a rifle club, a cricket club which exchanged matches with communities over a wide area, and a rugby union club, some of whose members joined with players from Moosomin and went down to Winnipeg to trounce a team there. There is an account of the victorious group continuing the play in the railroad coach on the return trip.

And there was tennis. Several families, including the Humphrys, built tennis courts on their property. Ernest Maltby, who had been a champion tennis player in India where he had lived when his father was governor of Madras, had two courts beside his house, and he organized the tournaments which attracted entries from as far away as Winnipeg.

Many women of the settlement filled their days with visiting back and forth, no doubt reminiscing endlessly over innumerable cups of tea of more leisurely days in England. A few letters written by Martha, one of the Humphrys' hired girls, have survived, and her comments are revealing: 'Mrs. Humphrys is never happy unless surrounded by visitors. There's very often people to luncheon, tea, or dinner, not forgetting the dances. There were about seventy people here to a dance in July. They looked like a lot of fools coming to be fed . . . she tries to keep up style as much as she can.'

Such a catalogue of sports, entertainment and social affairs would seem to imply that there was little time left for work. For some of the young bachelors who had been sent out by their well-to-do families to learn to farm this was probably true, but there were in the district many full-time farmers who had come into the area to take up land and make for themselves and their families a good livelihood. They paid little attention to the social and sporting life of the community. They formed an agricultural society and held an annual fair at which they exhibited their products. To some of them the English group was a source of discreet amusement, but James was well-liked and considered 'a fine old gentleman'. He in turn respected their industry and welcomed them warmly to his house when they had mutual farm matters to discuss. To the great amusement of the women in his household he

affected a collarless shirt on these occasions, feeling it was more 'democratic'. However, he was always correctly dressed when, in his capacity of justice of the peace, the Mounties brought before him an occasional horse thief or someone who had imbibed a bit too much. But there was little crime in the district and it appears his services as magistrate were seldom required.

His health did not permit him to do much of the heavy work. The boys did that, and he took care of the garden. 'Our kitchen garden is looking very well, and I believe I maintain my position as boss gardener in these parts' he wrote. But for the women of the household, even with Martha, the work was strenuous. Mary recalled in a letter many years later 'the hectic times when the hired man announced, "T'rashers is came" and then the men all trooping in for dinner to the long trestle table with the huge round of boiled beef, turnips, carrots, and potatoes, pies, raisin and apple by the dozen, and tea by the gallon poured out of big granite-ware teapots. What a time the women had, I sometimes wonder how they ever got through. Women of refinement from English homes who had never been accustomed to physical labour.'

In the spring of 1892 Jenny went back to England because of the illness and subsequent death of a beloved aunt. It was during her absence that the Shiny House had a narrow escape and in one of his weekly letters James wrote a full description: 'We had a scare on Saturday last. We had been burning stubble inside good ploughed fire guards and had left everything apparently quite safe, but a spark must have got blown on to one of the smudges we put round the crop last year but which we did not ignite, and from this it spread to the grass and with half a gale blowing, we soon had a roaring fire (the wind was from the east) coming down to the house. We got horses on to a plough and immediately drew a line on the west side of the bluff to the east of the house and to the north of the fire, and then having despatched Noel on the pony, Frank, to call up the neighbours, we set to work as hard as we could to beat it out. Ernest, Willie, Frank Bird and I and Mary and Nettie also came out with sacks to lend a hand. We stopped it on the north side and the sloughs and fire guards stopped it on the west. We then tackled it on the south where it was "burning back" as they call it, the wind being somewhat south of east. By the time the neighbours began to arrive it was conquered and we soon made an entire finish of it. It set fire to the remains of the oat straw pile which we had to leave to burn itself out, having seen that all was quite safe around the pile. The piece burned over is about ten acres. It was fortunate we were able to stop it as had it mastered us with the high wind blowing it might have done very great mischief.'

Indeed it might have. Prairie fires were responsible for many lost lives and much property damage. After

MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY REGINA

*Mary Maltby, from a photograph taken shortly after her marriage in the Church of All Saints in the summer of 1892.*

she had left Cannington Jenny wrote to a friend 'We had some prairie fires which I remember. One was round the big Fish Lake in the woods. All Cannington men went to fight it. We women had to take supplies to them. I remember my daughter coming back black as a sweep. Sad to relate a woman and her child were burned and died as a result.'

It was about this time that James started to raise pigs, and with his usual optimism and enthusiasm he wrote to Jenny of his certainty of making this venture successful. He had become a proponent of mixed farming, arguing logically that it was more profitable to freight one load of a concentrated product such as pork over the wretched trails than several loads of grain. Now his letters were filled with great detail on the progress of his pigs. 'Sally's youngsters are splendid specimens, six weeks old today. Polly's are seven months old and I think of making them into bacon in a month's time when I expect they will dress 160 to 180 pounds which will be just about the right size.' It was at this time the Indians called the house 'The House of Many Little Pigs'.

According to several old-timers James's home-cured bacon was equal to the best Wiltshire to be found in England. He was delighted with his first results and felt that now he had found the right specialty. Forthwith he built a pork factory on his property and purchased three hundred pigs. He took samples of his products all along the line from Moosomin to Grenfell. His salesmanship and

JOHN DE VISSER

*The raising bee for the Church of All Saints was held in June of 1884. The building was the first to be completed at Cannington Manor, and it still stands today, an exquisite memorial to its first parishioners.*

personality were irresistible and he received orders for all the bacon, ham, and sausages he could supply. But something went drastically wrong. The larger operation did not produce as fine a product as his samples, and the pork packages so confidently shipped along the trail began to come back as unacceptable. One family story has it that he insisted on highly spiced sausages as he had enjoyed them in England, and when the farmers thereabouts told him that Canadians did not like their sausages so well seasoned he replied testily 'Nonsense, that's the way to make sausages.' He might have weathered that particular storm but the farmers in the district could not guarantee delivery of a specific number of pigs, and he could not raise enough himself. Whatever the reasons the pork-packing venture was a disaster and his dwindling capital was further reduced. He had to write Jenny to arrange a loan for him, and his gratitude for this and her continued faith in him were pathetic and touching. '... but' he wrote, 'I have not given up hope of making a success of this place.'

Whatever his worries about money he did not let them interfere with arrangements for the wedding of his daughter Mary to Ernest Maltby. This took place in the summer of 1892, when Jenny was in England. James took care of all the arrangements, and kept Jenny informed: 'I have written all the invitations for the wedding and it took me two to three hours of steady writing as the young people want to have all the settlement asked . . . I have got two dozen light claret which I will make into claret cup to go as far as possible so the young men won't get their heads turned with strong waters. I don't want to let any whiskey go the rounds as I should be sorry to see in our house a repetition of what took place at . . . 's . . . young fellows drinking tumblers of neat whiskey, the young swine! I have a round of beef, thirty pounds in pickle, two hams, 12 cans of salmon and there will be a good lot of kickshaws, so I suppose we shall make a pretty good-looking breakfast table, but the chief ornament will alas be lacking in the absence of the dear wife . . . We had a grand time opening the box. It was emptied in the dining-room surrounded by a circle of expectant faces. It is such a nice suit you have sent me. I have put it on today and it fits me capitally. I think the wedding dress and Nettie's are very pretty indeed. We have

arranged with Mrs. McD. to make two dresses for Dora and Cecily for Three Dollars or not more than Three-fifty for the two. Mary has got some lovely flowers from Winnipeg and quite a number of pretty presents but no doubt the children will give you full particulars.'

Immediately after the wedding he wrote again: 'Now I must try to tell you something about the wedding. The dining-room was all set out the evening before and the table was loaded with good things. The big round of beef was perfectly cured and beautifully cooked; two hams, heaps of sandwiches, raised pork pies, all sorts of confectionery such as trifle, jellies, ladies' fingers, German Pastry, Queen cake, jam tartlets, lemon cheese cakes, velvet cream and the mighty wedding cake weighing seventy pounds which tasted as good as it looked. We are sending some by this mail for you. I had three large bedroom jugs of claret cup, and the bread pot was full of lemonade.

'The first of June opened showery but cleared up by ten and was a lovely day with a pleasant breeze. The big flag was blowing out gaily. The bride looked very nice and I think her dress was very pretty. She had a lovely Brussels lace veil lent by Mrs. Hanson and a bouquet of beautiful white hot house flowers that came from Winnipeg. The bridesmaids' dresses and their very floral hats were much admired. We had your carriage and Bess and Flora drew it, the other team taking a wagonful and Frank in the buckboard. The horses were all decorated with white rosettes. I wore my light summer check trousers and black morning coat with white scarf and a tall hat and was quite a swell, the children wanted to know who was the smart young man. Ernest drove the carriage with Mary and me and we got to the church in good time, the bridesmaids having gone on before in the wagon.

'The little church was quite full. Maltby was supported by Bob Bird as his best man. The ceremony was soon over and Ernest drove the bride and groom back. There was a big crowd at the breakfast which was a stand-up affair, the men waiting on the ladies. There was not much speechifying. Mr. Dobie proposed the health of the bride. Mr. Hanson proposed the health of Mr. and Mrs. Humphrys for which I had to return thanks and tell them that the day, bright and auspicious as it was, was to me clouded by the absence of my dear wife, etc. Ernest photographed Mary in her bridal array by herself in the dining room and later on he photographed the wedding party. The house was strewed with rice and all the east part of the grounds. The pair got into the rig and were drawn by a number of the boys round to the gate being pelted with rice, this was to avoid the risk of the horses being restive. They were hitched up just outside our gate and Bob Bird drove them to Moosomin making the trip in four and a half hours. So the proceedings passed off all right.'

As the summer passed a note of nostalgia crept into James's letters. He missed Jenny desperately and he admitted he envied her her chance to be 'in dear old London again' and hoped she would not find 'Cannington too dull and uninteresting after the dear old country.' He was depressed about his financial losses, and he worried about the political situation both in Canada and in England. 'I feel some anxiety as to the result of the general election in England. I feel after all Gladstone will obtain, with the aid of the Irish contingent, a majority, and if he takes office and home rule is passed I should not be surprised if it led to a civil war.'

Towards the end of the summer Jenny came home and the household settled down to normal. Mary was in her own house in the village, Nurse had married and left, and Ernest was at home less as he had begun to accept contracts for small building jobs in the neighbourhood. Eventually he left to take a job with the CPR. Two other sons took care of the farm and James contented himself with his garden and his music. His health continued to fail. A granddaughter wrote that she remembers how he used to slide down the stairs with his gouty leg on a tin tray, but she does not remember how he got up again.

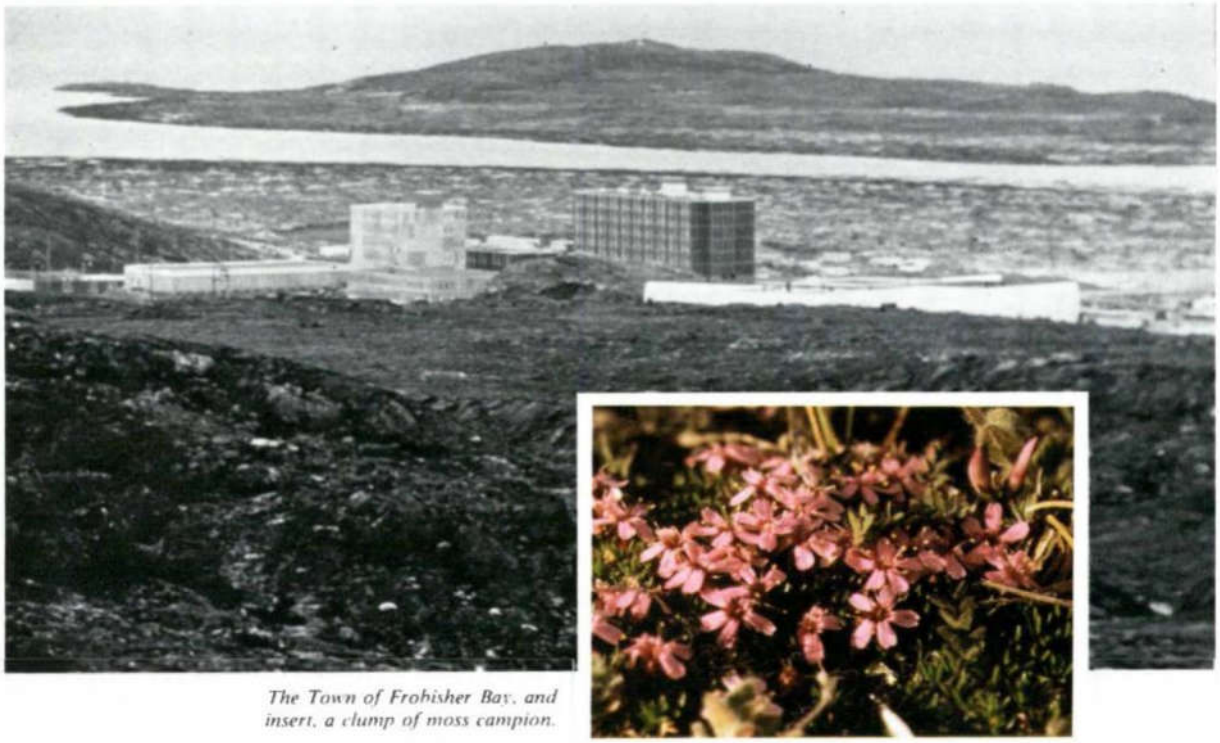
Inevitably the passing years brought changes, not just to one family but to the whole community. In 1897 the wealthy Beckton brothers gave up their stock farm and left, and their departure hastened the decline in the fortunes of the village. Young unmarried men, weary of the drudgery of farming, went farther afield seeking the adventure of the Klondike and the South African War. Then in 1900 the final blow fell. The long-awaited branch line of the CPR came, ten miles to the south. It spelled the end of Cannington Manor. A new town named Manor grew up at the railway and small businesses and many residents re-established there. Cannington was a farming district and the little village was deserted.

Jenny and James and those children who had not married or left home stayed on at the farm. Then one morning in 1903 Jenny awoke to find her beloved 'hubs' had died in his sleep. He was sixty-six years old. Soon after, Jenny and her unmarried children moved to Vancouver.

It is good to report that the saga of the Shiny House did not end with the scattering of the Humphrys family. Arthur Hewlett, one of the young men who had come from England in the '90s to learn to farm, bought the property, lived there and worked the land most of his life. To his wife, A. E. M. Hewlett, must go the credit for searching out and writing down the story of Cannington Manor. With her numerous articles for magazines and newspapers she kept alive the memory of a gallant band of pioneers whose dreams and industry, failures and spirit of adventure are forever woven into the fabric of the history of Saskatchewan.◆

# The Flowers of Frobisher Bay

*By Elizabeth Parnis*



*The Town of Frobisher Bay, and insert, a clump of moss campion.*

BUT THEY ARE SO SMALL!

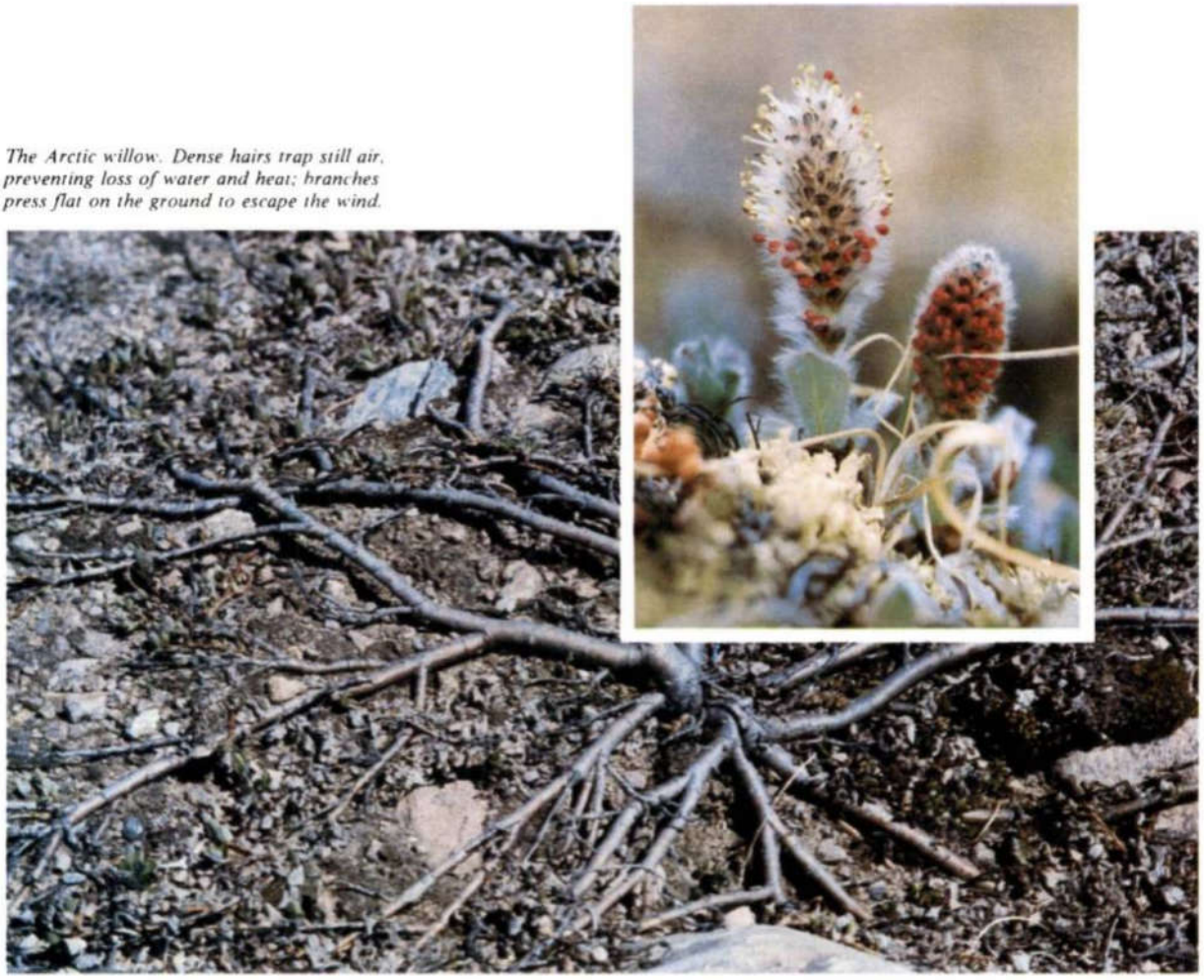
This was our first impression of the flowers of Frobisher Bay. Buttercups, *Ranunculus hyperboreus*, Rottb., that measured an inch from root tip to petal top, pressed hard against the soil. The same buttercups grew an inch overnight after being brought into the hotel for pressing, as if relieved to be in the warmth. Moss campion flowers, *Silene acaulis* L., a half-inch in diameter were borne, it seemed, on no pedicel, but on the surface of a cushion of leaves; these, however, had long tap roots of four to six inches or more reaching down to soil moisture below.

Then there were the willows — several species — but the tallest tree we saw was no more than eighteen inches high and hugging the warm protective rock-side. Others, whose age could be fifty years or more, not so sheltered, had pressed their branches out flat on the ground like spokes of a wheel. Each spoke was bursting into leaf and blossoming. The willow catkins standing upright from the branches were a beautiful sight. Often in the variety *Salix arctica* Pall. they were densely hairy. *Salix herbacea* L. was unusual, for it produced only two leaves and a catkin with about six or seven female flowers in some of the specimens we found.

Frobisher Bay, with a population of 2,500, is on a deep inlet of the same name in southern Baffin Island in the North West Territories. Although it lies at 63° 45′north latitude and south of the Arctic Circle, it is in an area vegetatively called the Low Arctic. This area is delimited roughly on the south by the 10°C. isotherm for the warmest month; this coincides approximately with the tree line. It passes gradually into the mid-Arctic, then the High Arctic where the vegetation cover is less than ten per cent, or is confined to stream beds and pond edges.

The tundra around Frobisher Bay in early July is magnificent; a huge rock garden composed of ancient rocks of granites and gneisses, covered with a variety of lichens including black rock tripe, *Umbilicaria* sp.,

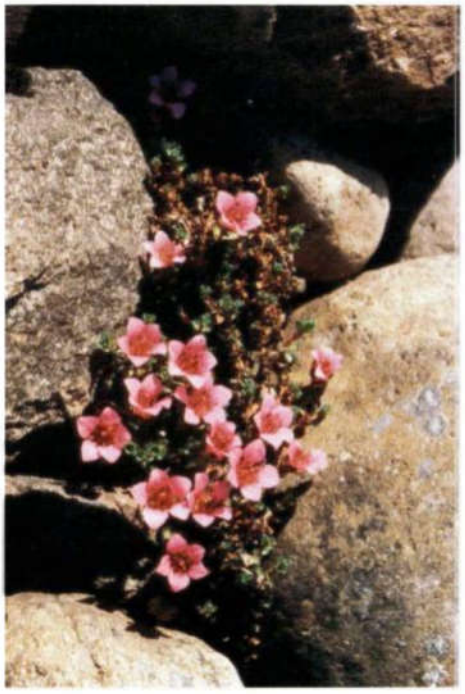
*The Arctic willow. Dense hairs trap still air, preventing loss of water and heat; branches press flat on the ground to escape the wind.*



*Jewel lichen.*

*Photographs are by the author, Elizabeth Parnis, who is assistant curator of the McGill University Plant Science Department, Macdonald College, Ste Anne de Bellevue, Quebec.*

*Arctic poppies — miniature solar heaters that turn their faces to follow the sun and reflect its rays with their petals to a central point.*



*Purple saxifrage.*

*Leaves of a leathery texture in the heath family plants (here, Ledum decumbens (Ait.) Lodd.) aid in reducing water losses.*

*The white heather has leaves that are evergreen and last from four to five years; the plant commences photosynthesis as soon as the warmer spring days arrive.*

*The aptly-named hairy lousewort is protected by dense hair that provides insulation and prevents loss of moisture.*

and Jewel lichen, orange *Caloplaca* sp. Other lichens are grey, black and yellow, or cream-coloured — a study in themselves — while between the rocks is a cushioned carpet of mosses and lichens of various species, black and grey and yellow. One notices that it is warm when one lies down to photograph the flowers that are interspersed.

Many of the flowers grow in dense clumps or cushions such as Mountain avens, *Dryas integrifolia* M. Vahl (the territorial flower of the North West Territories), Moss campion, *Silene acaulis* L. and *Diapensia lapponica L.* These can form clumps sometimes three feet across and if one takes a temperature reading within the clump, it can be several degrees higher than the air around. In July the average temperature at Frobisher is 8°C., with a day-time reading of 10-13°C. and there is nearly always a wind which keeps the air even cooler above the ground.

The wind is one factor that keeps the plants low especially in the winter months when, combined with blowing snow crystals, it forms a great abrasive force. To aid the plants further in the battle to provide an environment warm enough for the various physiological functions, including photosynthesis, that require specific temperature ranges, one finds leaves and stems densely covered by hairs as in aptly-named hairy lousewort, *Pedicularis hirsuta* L., or the arctic willow, *Salix arctica* Pall. The hairs help by trapping still air, thus preventing water loss, and providing insulation against temperature loss. Most arctic plants are physiologically adapted to enable them to photosynthesize and respire at temperatures lower than their more temperate relatives.

Some flowers, such as the arctic poppy, *Papaver radicatum* Rottb., and *Potentilla nivea* L., seem to show no apparent adaptive features at first glance, and raise their flowers four to five inches above the soil. Actually their adaptation is to delay the raising of the flowers from soil level until ready for insect pollination. Temperatures can be below freezing during the flowering season and they, along with other arctic flowers, have an amazing ability to withstand intermittent freezing and thawing without damage. The arctic poppy shows, in fact, great physiological adaptation to its harsh environment by breaking dormancy, growing, flowering, and producing mature seed all within one month.

In early summer the plants show a rush of floral activity, a sense of urgency to fulfil themselves, and reproduce before winter sets in with its sunless days. The plants are aided by the long 'warm' days. At the beginning of July the sun sets at about 10:30 p.m. and rises again at about 2:30 a.m.; it never really is dark. However, as days are often cloudy and the sun's elevation is low, the net solar energy is just enough to enable the plants to carry through their life cycles in a period considerably shorter than temperate zone plants.

On this part of Baffin Island, the hills are not high (about 400 feet above sea level), are well rounded and show ample evidence of glaciation. The soil on the whole in this region is scant and poor in nutrients. This is one of the main factors contributing to the low stature of the arctic plants. Any increase in the nitrogen content of the soil produces a luxuriant plant growth when compared to other less rich areas. Frobisher Bay has long been an Inuit settlement and at the original homesite of Ikaluit with its inevitable accumulation of nitrogen wastes over the years, the abundance of flowers is most noticeable. Indeed Frobisher Bay seems like a floral oasis in an area that has a low average annual precipitation of fifteen to nineteen inches. With the rest of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, it is often considered essentially an arctic desert. Because of the overall shortage of water in areas that are rocky or of gravelly soil, arctic plants show adaptations to prevent desiccation. Wintering buds may be found just below the soil surface; or they are protected by persisting leaves or stipules, if found above the surface. A hairy surface or a leathery texture, as is seen in the heath family plants of Lapland rosebay and white heather, aids in reducing water losses. The white heather, with its flowers hanging like carillons, flourishes in patches, especially in those depressions which are filled with snow-drifts in the winter. The leaves of this attractive plant are evergreen and last from four to five years. The possession of evergreen leaves does away with the need to provide energy each year for the formation of new leaves. The heath family plants all possess the ability to commence photosynthesis as soon as the warmer spring days arrive, rather than having to go through an adjustment period. Thus full advantage is taken of every minute of solar energy.

The retention of old parts during the winter protects the new and helps to form eddies which in a blizzard deposit the snow gently among the leaves rather than lashing the overwintering buds with abrasive snow crystals. The leaves of *Saxifraga tricuspidata* Rottb. are evergreen and last for three years; then they become reduced to hard cartilaginous spines, the skeletal remains, that likewise nurture the young tissues.

Perhaps one of the most interesting adaptations is found in the flowers of the arctic poppy and the mountain avens. These flowers could be called miniature solar heaters with parabolic flowers. They turn to face the sun and follow, so to speak, its course, while the rays striking the petals are reflected and concentrated at a central focal point. Here the temperature rises several degrees, enabling insects to bask in the warmth and the fertilized ovary to ripen on time. It can be seen that many are the possible adaptations shown by arctic plants. Nature here is in tune with the environment and one has to wonder at its limitless ingenuity. ◆

# POTTERY in Prehistoric Manitoba

**By Leigh Syms**

*Dr Syms is assistant professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Brandon University. Photographs are by the author, except where otherwise stated.*

*An example of Laurel pottery, the earliest form of ceramic vessel made by the small nomadic groups who inhabited the boreal forests of eastern and northern Manitoba centuries ago. From The Pas site in northern Manitoba. Scale is a six-inch ruler.*

OVER 2,000 YEARS AGO in a period of social and technological turmoil, the Indian tribes south of the Great Lakes developed horticulture and underwent marked population growth and displacement. At the same time tribes throughout many of the forests of North America began to make pottery as a basic part of their technology and life style. Ceramic technology had been present in what is now the south-eastern United States since 2000 B.C. and for 1,000 years before that it was known along the western coast of South America. It did not appear in Manitoba, however, until it was a basic item of the forest tribes around the Great Lakes.

On the basis of scattered references to eye-witness accounts by early travellers and accounts of elderly native informants (as well as by the nature of the pottery itself) we know that pottery was made primarily by women as one of their basic household activities. The knowledge was passed from mother to daughter as a traditional, inherited privilege. It involved the mastery of considerable knowledge of clays and tempering materials as well as the expertise to produce these large, thin-walled vessels by hand. During the warm season when they were accessible, certain clays were selected from the banks and rivers. Crushed and pulverized rock (granites, schists, gneisses), sand or shell were mixed, as tempering, with the clay to give it body and to reduce cracking during drying and firing. The paste was then made into a variety of forms using several techniques and the vessels were fired to relatively low temperatures, rarely exceeding 900° Centigrade. There is little evidence of kilns; vessels were fired on the ground or in holes by covering the dried vessels with mounds of hot ashes, using as fuel sticks, bark, bison 'chips' or grass.

The pots were made either by building up the vessels with a series of coils, or by starting with a base and adding chunks of clay that were thinned and formed by holding a rock on the interior and patting the exterior with a hand-sized paddle. Another method was to make a fabric mould and build the clay vessel inside the mould. This latter technique has been mentioned in a few early accounts; now evidence for it has been discovered by archaeologists during the last few years when researchers have attempted major reconstructions of vast quantities of fragments. The

*The analysis of ceramics requires thousands of hours of reconstructing, measuring, and scrutinizing fragments of vessels. Here Dr Syms checks the details of a fabric impression with a 10X hand lens.*

DON CROWHURST

fabric impressions on these reconstructed vessels provide important insights into the textile techniques that were used: weaving, twining, and knotless netting. The fabrics themselves are no longer present in the sites due to disintegration.

The traditional vessels in Manitoba and adjacent areas have many forms. The most common were large conical or globular cooking or storage pots. Bowls, small platters or lamps, small religious mortuary vessels, and cylindrical vessels for ceremonial containment of bison meat are other forms that have been reported or reconstructed. Archaeologists have identified numerous types and categories within and near Manitoba, and current research continues to result in the discovery of new kinds of vessels that provide exciting and controversial insights.

The ceramics in Manitoba are distinguished throughout most periods by a marked contrast between vessels from the boreal forest of eastern and northern Manitoba and vessels from the grasslands of southern Manitoba. There are also marked changes in the ceramic technology and the life styles of the people throughout the 2,000 years that prehistoric pottery was produced.

In the boreal forest, Laurel pottery is the earliest form. It is conical, smooth-baked, coil-made pottery reflecting a long tradition of technological expertise. Some of the vessels were plain; others were decorated by punctates or by designs made with notched sticks. (One unusual pattern called Laurel Pseudo Scallop Shell was probably produced with a specially-carved notched stick.) The decoration was applied while the clay of the vessel was still moist, and was confined to the upper portions of the vessels. Laurel pottery was made by small nomadic groups who relied on the woodland resources; moose, fish, caribou, bear, beaver, muskrat, waterfowl, and a host of small and medium-sized fur bearers. These people first appeared about 200 B.C. and lived in the boreal forest of northern Minnesota, eastern and northern Manitoba and adjacent Ontario, until A.D. 700; there is some indication that they persisted until A.D. 1100 inside the peripheries of northern Manitoba and Ontario.

At a slightly later date, circa A.D. 1, several tribal groups of nomadic bison hunters using pottery appeared on the Plains. We find Avonlea pottery (with a shape similar to Laurel but covered with a net-impression and lacking the decorative techniques), Valley pottery with more rounded form and textile impression that spirals around the vessel, and Besant-Sonota pottery that had a conoidal 'coconut-shaped' form and a variety of textile fabrics clearly impressed in the clay. These forms of pottery disappeared by

*This vessel is an example of the Valley pottery used by nomadic bison hunters who appeared on the plains about A.D. 1. It is nearly 15" high.*

A.D. 800. Additional forms of conoidal pottery that have not yet been named, have been found in sites along the Souris River of south-western Manitoba.

These plains groups were undoubtedly hunters who followed the seasonal movements of the bison from the open plains in the summer to the shelter of wooded valleys, wooded uplands such as Turtle Mountain, and the aspen parkland in the winter. There is limited evidence about the ceramics because archaeologists have tended to concentrate their excavations in the middle of the kill areas of bison jumps rather than in the nearby village areas. Many of the plains groups for these periods had differences in their ceramic forms; they also had differences in forms of projectiles and choices of raw materials.

Many of the vessels were medium-sized, about 15 inches high, and were used for cooking and storage. It is not clear what advantage was associated with the conical form. Some vessels had charred incrustations on their interiors indicating that soups had been boiled in them.

About A.D. 800, there was a dramatic change in the cultural history and ceramic technology of Manitoba. These changes can only be appreciated in light of developments that took place elsewhere. Beginning about A.D. 800, large agricultural settlements developed along the broad valleys of the Mississippi River and by A.D. 1100 had produced large urban centres such as Cahokia (in present-day East St. Louis, Illinois), based on intensive corn crops. Village tribes moved up the Missouri River into North Dakota in response to both a warmer climate and the introduction of corn horticulture; there was tremendous population growth and the development of continent-wide trade networks.

Village settlements along the Missouri River provided stable centres for trade networks, and the impetus for nomadic hunters from the plains and boreal forest to trade meat and skins for corn, beans and squash. As these relationships developed the woodland groups becoming more plains-oriented and spent more time in southern Manitoba to be nearer the trade centres.

In the late 8th century, Algonquian-speaking peoples making Blackduck pottery spread throughout the boreal forest of eastern and northern Manitoba and along the rivers into the aspen parkland and plains of western Manitoba. They made globular vessels and decorated them with bands of pattern, using cord-wrapped dowel impressions and small depressions or punctates. The vessels were thin-walled (often about 1/8 inch thick) and covered with vertical textile impressions of the fabric moulds. These people used the bow and arrow and represented the earliest evidence of forest Indians shifting to regular seasonal utilization of bison herds. They were present until about A.D. 1400, when they migrated elsewhere — probably eastward to the Great Lakes where their pots are found in sites north of Lake Superior.

*Partial reconstruction of a Blackduck vessel from the Lord site, St. Norbert, Manitoba, dated A.D. 780.*

*A toy pot, probably made by a young Cree girl learning to imitate her mother's activities many centuries ago. Although only two inches across and crudely made, it has a textile fabric finish, a single row of punctates around the edge and notched lip design.*

Archaeologists have identified Selkirk or Clearwater Lake Punctate pottery with the Cree of northern and eastern Manitoba. This pottery is globular, but somewhat different in form from Blackduck; it has tightly-woven textile impressions and is generally decorated with a single row of punctates. It dates from A.D. 900 to the historic period of contact with traders when copper kettles replaced the bulkier and more fragile ceramics.

*Student archaeologists carefully trowelling and recording pottery finds at the Stott site along the valley of the Assiniboine River near Brandon.*

Among the Clearwater Lake Punctate vessels reported during extensive excavations in the Southern Indian Lake region of northern Manitoba are bowls and another form that is unique to that region. It is shallow with an upturned edge, elliptical, and it often has several pencil-lead-sized holes through the centre. This form may eventually be found elsewhere when archaeologists in other areas spend more time reconstructing vessels; at present it appears very localized. Its function remains controversial; it could be a dish, a platter for berries, or a shallow lamp. It resembles an Inuit stone lamp and may be an Indian adaptation of that lamp in ceramic form.

On the plains, the period from A.D. 800 to historic contact is represented by a vast array of ceramics of numerous groups who occupied southern Manitoba or who entered southern Manitoba either to take part in seasonal hunts of the migrating bison herds or to trade. During the period A.D. 900 to 1400, a plains group made distinctive cup-sized mortuary vessels which were smooth, incised with lines that spiralled or formed sacred images of Thunderbirds (spirit of thunder, lightning and storms), bison, turtles, and broken arrows. These people were involved in part of a continent-wide trade which enabled them to receive gulf coast shells from Florida to make masks, gorgets, and beads, and to receive dentalium shell from the west coast near Vancouver Island.

Other ceramics had thick shoulders and impressions of fabric moulds using double-strand open-weft techniques; smooth, globular vessels with S-shaped rims and incising or finger-nail impressions have also been found. Some pottery sherds found in southwestern Manitoba have the characteristics of Mississippian vessels from southern Minnesota: S-rims and twisted-cord impressions in imitation of the pottery made by the sedentary, horticultural, village-dwelling ancestors of the Mandan and Hidatso Indians living along the Missouri River of North Dakota.

The understanding of the utilization of southern Manitoba prior to the fur trade is marred by a lack of knowledge of the different tribes who used the area (for example Hidatso, Mandan, Crow, Cheyenne, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Western Cree, Western Ojibwa or Bungi, Eastern or Santee Sioux and Western or Teton Sioux and other less-likely possibilities.) It is not known either how many different ceramic traditions actually existed because archaeological work on the subject has been limited. Neither is it known how the archaeological and historic tribal groups were related. It is clear however, that there is a tremendous variety of ceramics due to migration, development, seasonal utilization, and the blending of traits through social interchange.

Ceramics represent a skill in a pliable medium that enables archaeologists to detect considerable variability and rapid change; at the same time distinctive styles were maintained, for tradition was strong among the women in prehistoric small-scale societies. These ceramics provide a sensitive indication of developments in Manitoba's heritage. As the complexity of the archaeological record increases the richness of the cultural heritage is revealed. It includes not only several hundred years of European ceramic technology, but more than 2,000 years of indigenous native ceramics. ◆

*Dr Ray, associate professor in the department of geography, York University, Toronto, is author of 'Indians in the Fur Trade: their role as trappers, hunters, and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870'.*

*Permission from the Hudson's Bay Company to quote from its archives is gratefully acknowledged.*

*'Trading Ceremony at York Factory, 1780s': a painting by Adam Sherriff Scott.*

# *Higgling and Haggling at Ye Bay*

By Arthur J. Ray

PROBABLY FEW ASPECTS of the Hudson's Bay Company's operations have been the subject of more contemporary public controversy, scholarly confusion, and conflicting interpretations, than the complicated system of official and unofficial standards of trade that were employed at the early fur-trade posts.

Critics of the Company, such as Arthur Dobbs, charged that the Company's traders used a secret tariff to obtain higher prices for its goods than the official standard of trade specified. In the early eighteenth century Dobbs contended that this unofficial rate was so high that it was discouraging the Indians from coming down to the Bay thereby driving them over to the French to the detriment of the imperial interests of the British Crown.

On the other hand, some scholars of the fur trade have contended that the official standards of trade offer prima facie evidence that price competition was not an important aspect of the North American sphere of the Hudson's Bay Company's operations; these standards were remarkably stable over long periods in spite of rapidly changing economic conditions in Europe and North America. Rather than the lure of better rates of exchange, it has been suggested that European competition for the Indians' furs was channelled largely into the political sphere. According to this interpretation, the manipulation of Indian alliances, largely through the gift-giving ceremony, was the key to success.

These two views raise a number of questions. How closely did the official standards of trade approximate the actual current rates? How much did actual rates of exchange vary at the trading posts and how did the Indians respond to these fluctuations?

Any effort to deal with these problems necessarily involves a consideration of another aspect of the Hudson's Bay Company's business that has been a source of confusion — the 'overplus'. E. E. Rich originally suggested that the overplus represented a surplus fund of goods that was derived at each post by application of the unofficial double standard or factor's standard as it was variously called. According to Rich, these surplus goods were directly reinvested in the fur trade — given to the Indians in the gift-exchange ceremonies that preceded trade. If one accepts this view, then it is difficult to see the overplus as a part of the Company's gross returns in a given year or as a gauge of aggregate price variations within the system. However, there is reason to question Rich's interpretation of this critical aspect of the trade.

In an effort to clarify the roles that the official standards of trade, the double standard and the overplus played in the Hudson's Bay Company fur trade, this discussion will focus on the first century of trade when many of the conventions were established. An attempt will also be made to relate the interpretations offered to the questions raised regarding price variations and Indian responses to them.

The historian E. E. Rich was one of the first scholars to point out that the official standards of trade of the Hudson's Bay Company exhibited surprisingly little variation over prolonged periods. In commenting on this phenomenon, Rich suggested that two factors were primarily responsible. On the one hand, the Governor and Committee wanted to maintain centralized control and ensure that its own posts did not compete with each other. Hence, the standards were set in London. On the other hand, Rich suggested that the Company was unable to adjust its prices in response to changing supply and demand conditions in European markets because the Indians, coming from non-market economies, had no conception of the laws of supply and demand that operated to set trade values. Rather, the latter became established conventions to the Indians from which the Europeans could not depart significantly without running the risk of losing their trading contacts.

While the suggestion that the need to maintain central control to minimize the potential for inter-post competition may explain why the standards of trade did not differ substantially from post to post, it does not explain temporal stability in pricing. If conditions warranted it, the Company could have raised or lowered the official standards at all of the posts simultaneously.

The suggestion that long-term stability in the official standards of trade related to the fact that the Indians had no conception of market principles warrants closer scrutiny; it suggests that the official standards of trade approximated the actual current terms of trade and that the economic behaviour of the Indians differed sharply from that of their European trading partners.

Although conventions established in trading and political alliances might serve to check alterations in the standards of trade to some degree, more basic and practical economic considerations should not be overlooked. Soon after contact the Indians developed a strong taste for certain luxury items like alcohol and tobacco, and an increasing dependence on European

*Rare examples of 'cartouche' or all-purpose knives. These appeared on the Company's invoices from the early years of the 19th century. The mark shown on the knife, third from the left, dates from the 18th century. From the H B C Archives collection; photograph by Neil Campbell.*

*Trade goods from the earlier years of the 18th century: a flint-lock gun with powder horn; tobacco in leaf and cake form; chunks of sugar chipped from a loaf; canoe knives in the foreground, with a bullet mould, flints, and beads to the right; brass wire for snares or decoration; packages of needles, and to the left centre, a knife and awl. Beaded garments are made from stroud, a heavy serviceable cloth, and the white blanket that provides the background is an example of the earliest blankets traded in the Bay. From the H B C collection; photograph by Chris Grant.*

traders for other more basic items: firearms, ammunition, metal wares, and cloth. To obtain these goods, many bands travelled long distances; groups coming from the hinterlands of Fort Churchill and York Factory made round trips of more than 1,000 miles and encountered many hazards along the way. Furthermore, the cargo capacities of the Indian canoes were limited, allowing them to bring in only 80 to 100 prime beaver pelts, or the equivalent, per man. These constraints surely would have served to encourage the Indians to press for stable rates of exchange, or at least rates that changed slowly over time. Otherwise, the Indians would have had to face the prospect of undertaking long and dangerous voyages without any degree of certainty that their furs would fetch prices that were sufficient to enable them to purchase the goods they required.

Also, because of the time that was required to make the trip down to and back from the Bay, and the shortness of the canoeing season, trade had to be conducted as expeditiously as possible. A stable standard of trade served as a basic reference for the Europeans and the Indians, enabling them to come to terms with relative ease. Indeed, the Governor and Committee in London were quick to appreciate this point and hoped that a fixed standard might enable some groups to visit the Bay more than once a year. For instance, on 22 May 1682 they sent instructions to Governor John Nixon at Fort Albany informing him that:

> In all places where we have already traded *you are in your dealing with them to keepe to the Standard* of Commerce which was formerly agreed and Setled by Mr Bayley which will not only facilitate your Trade when the Indians come downe wth their Goods

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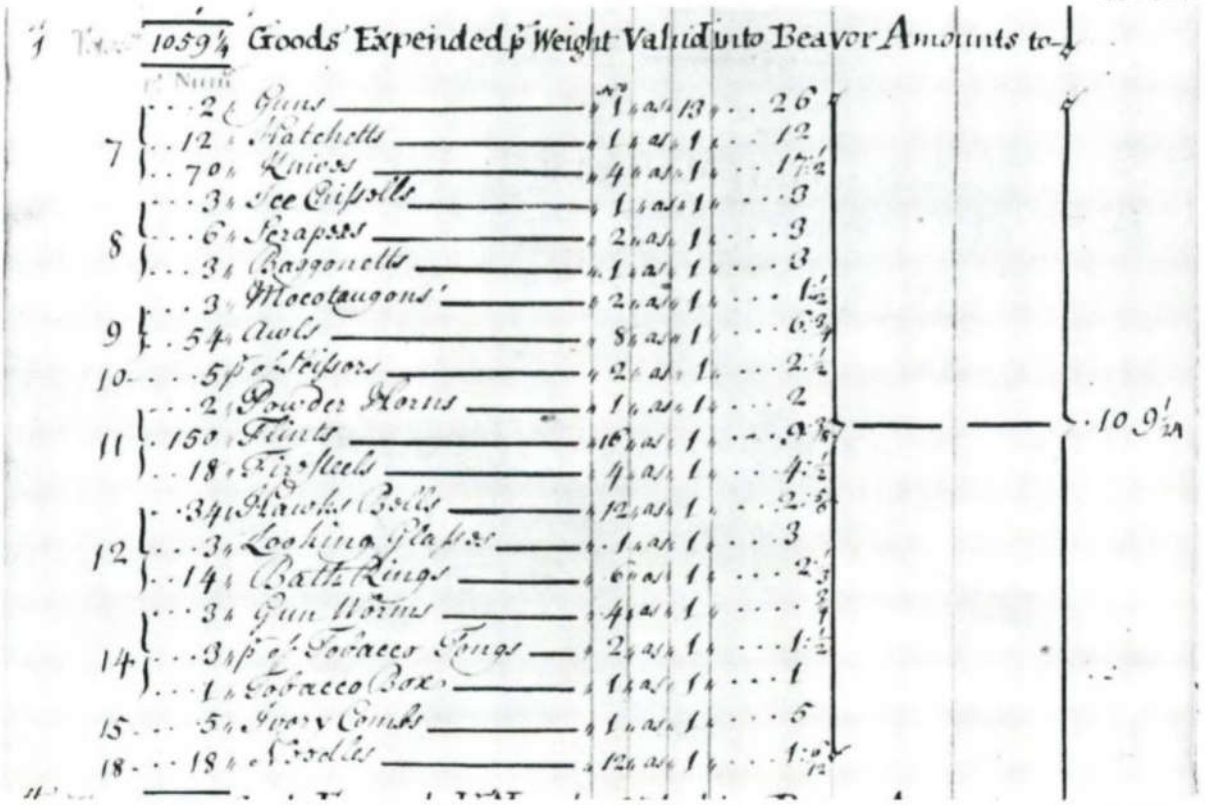



*A section of a page from the York Factory Account Book dated 1714-1715. The price for a gun was set at 13 prime beaver pelts, and knives were four for one pelt. Summer furs or beaver coats that were 'very much worn and have little furr' were also traded, but only after a certain amount of haggling. The only Indian word is 'Mocotaugons' which means crooked knives.*

*A Hudson's Bay Company fur 'pack'.* PAC

but may give such quick dispatch that some of the neerest Indians may make two returnes in a season.

The Governor and Committee added further that such quick negotiation was desirable for it gave the Company's servants less opportunity to engage in illegal private trade. In short, stable standards of trade served the economic interests of the Indians and Company alike.

Yet some flexibility in pricing was necessary and there is considerable evidence which indicates that actual terms of trade often differed substantially from the official standards.

From the outset, one of the official standards, the comparative standard which assigned Made Beaver values to all of the Indians' pelts and country produce, was too rigid to be workable. All equivalencies were expressed in terms of prime winter furs, and Indians always brought in significant quantities of summer furs and badly-worn coat beaver. These poorer grades of fur had to be discounted. Writing in the expenses section of the earliest surviving account book, that of York Factory for 1688, John Lawson explained the problem and provided some very important insights into the nature and origin of the overplus. In view of the importance of his explanation it will be quoted *in toto*. Lawson apparently believed it was necessary to account for the overplus, suggesting perhaps that it had previously not been a routine aspect of the business, and he wrote:

The Reason how this overplus Beavr ariseth is many times an Indian Bringing Summer skins to Trade for wch I give but half as much as I doo for Winter Beav'r wch is considerable, likewise their doth arise many times amongst Indians Beavr Coates some of them very much worn & have little furr upon them & is not reasonable that Wee should take them for merchantable Beavr. Should Wee, the Inds would laugh at us & would not take care of their Beav'r but would bring us much more then they doe of such Touered Torn Stuff and Summer Beav'r which I apprehend not to have above half as much furr upon it as ye Winter Beav'r hath. therefore I thinke it not convenient to give soe much for yt as I doe for Winter Beav'r & good Beav'r nither doe ye Indians Expect it: But when Wee pack this Beav'r for England Wee accott all Beav'r Skins that will hold ye Size of a Beav'r & those that will not for half Beav'r Skins. Now if there be any Damage in this I would desire to know it. I can see none from hence ariseth this overplus as it is called, but it really belongs to ye number.

Lawson's account is significant: it makes it clear that, in spite of the existence of the stable comparative standard there necessarily was considerable latitude to make adjustments for the differences in the quality of the peltry that the Indians brought in, and hence, its Made Beaver value. This opened the door for higgling and haggling over the basic terms of trade. Equally important, his comment indicates that the early overplus did not consist of goods, as Rich suggested, but rather, of furs. This resulted from the fact that, although furs were discounted at the time of trade presumably in reference to their actual quality, at the end of the year all furs were assigned full value according to the comparative standard if they were full size. Hence the final fur tally would have been inflated relative to the true purchasing power that it represented to the Indians. For this reason, in the early years, the Made Beaver value of the goods traded, as determined by the annual inventory of the warehouse, would have been less than that of the furs received. The overplus was determined by subtracting the total value of the goods traded expressed in Made Beaver from the total value of the furs received, equated in Made Beaver. Thus, initially the overplus simply was a statement of the number of skins that were being shipped home in excess of those that should have been given for the quantity of goods that had been traded and assuming that all the furs that had been received were prime.

Besides having to make allowances for variations in the quality of the peltry that they received, the Company traders were increasingly pressured by the Governor and Committee in London to adjust the rates of exchange in response to changing market conditions in Europe. This pressure was particularly strong in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when England and France were at war. During this period the costs of acquiring trade goods rose, as did transportation expenses, while at the same time the demand for furs in Europe declined. Although they were aware of the advantages of holding the standards constant, the Company was caught in a cost-price squeeze and the Governor and Committee therefore hoped that their representatives in the Bay could relieve some of the financial pressures by advancing the standards. However, the traders were cautioned not to do anything that would antagonize the Indians.

The solution of the problem appears to have involved widening the application of an unofficial standard and applying it not only to furs but to goods as well. Therefore, whereas dickering over the actual rates of exchange was originally centred around evaluations of the quality of the pelts, by the late seventeenth century it had been extended to include bargaining over the quantities of goods that would be exchanged per unit of Made Beaver received. In other words, a true form of higgling and haggling had developed.

In the case of discrete items like kettles or guns, the factors often demanded more furs than the standard of trade specified. When items had to be measured at the time of trade, as was the case with commodities like cloth, powder, tobacco or brandy, more subtle means were employed to advance the actual rates of exchange. In these instances, short measures were given, scales were surreptitiously weighted, or water was added as became customary when dispensing brandy. An examination of Andrew Graham's observations suggests that almost sixty-five per cent of the gain that was made by unofficially advancing trade-goods prices was derived from the sales of items that were measured at the time of exchange.

Although the factors were thereby able to establish an unofficial rate of exchange (hereinafter the actual rate that came to be known as the double or factor's standard), they did so only with the full knowledge of their Indian trading partners, as Rich has pointed out. Contrary to many popular views, the Indians themselves were skilled traders who were not easily duped. They were fully aware of the fact that the standard of trade was being contravened. The troublesome question which thus arises is, why did the Indians resist alterations in the standard of trade, while at the same time permitting the factors to work the double standard?

The solution of this seemingly paradoxical attitude on the part of the Indians appears to relate to the point raised earlier, that the standards of trade served as a base of reference, or a language of trade, that enabled the Hudson's Bay Company traders and the Indians to come to terms quickly about what the actual terms of trade would be in a given year. Evidence to support this interpretation can be found in the trading speeches contained in the records left by James Isham and Andrew Graham. According to Isham, an Indian leader commonly told the factors to 'tell your Servants to fill the measure and not to put their finger's within the Brim . . . Give us Good measure . . . Let us see the old measures.' Graham's account of the trade speech is very similar to Isham's. He too reported that the Indians asked the factors to 'Tell your servants to fill the measure up to the brim . . . Let the young men have more than measure . . . give us good measure in cloth, let us see the old measure.' Graham added that:

> The Factor in his turn tells them the great men in England loves the Indians so well, that with great trouble and danger, send the great ship yearly full of goods to supply their wants, and strongly talks to them not to be lazy but get furs in the winter . . . and harangues upon the largeness of the measures, and the smallness of the Canadians strongly advising them not to deal with them etc.

Significantly, judging from these reports, the measures were not questioned in these verbal exchanges which preceded trade. Rather, the Indians asked to see the old measures and demanded that they be filled or exceeded. The factor responded by saying that the Company's standards were already larger than those of the opposition. Thus, in effect, the Indian's ideal was to obtain full measure, or trade according to the official standard of trade, whereas exchange according to that standard represented the lowest price in furs which the factors would accept for their goods.

In fact, an examination of the post account books of the Hudson's Bay Company for the period before 1770 reveals that the factors always managed to exceed the standard of trade. As in the earliest years, the gain that was made was reported as overplus. An analysis of the accounting procedures that were used shows that the traders did not keep a record of daily transactions (excepting expenses and men's debts for goods bought on credit) and therefore, had no way of knowing at any point in time how much overplus had been gained. As had been the practice initially, this was not determined until the end of the year when closing inventories were taken to determine how many furs had been received and what quantity of goods had been traded in return. These inventories were valued according to the official Company standards. The difference between the value of the fur receipts and goods traded represented that portion of gross returns that had been obtained by applying the factor's standard. An examination of the beaver-packing accounts (the fur shipment accounts) of the trading posts reveals that these overplus furs were returned to London every year as part of the total fur shipment.

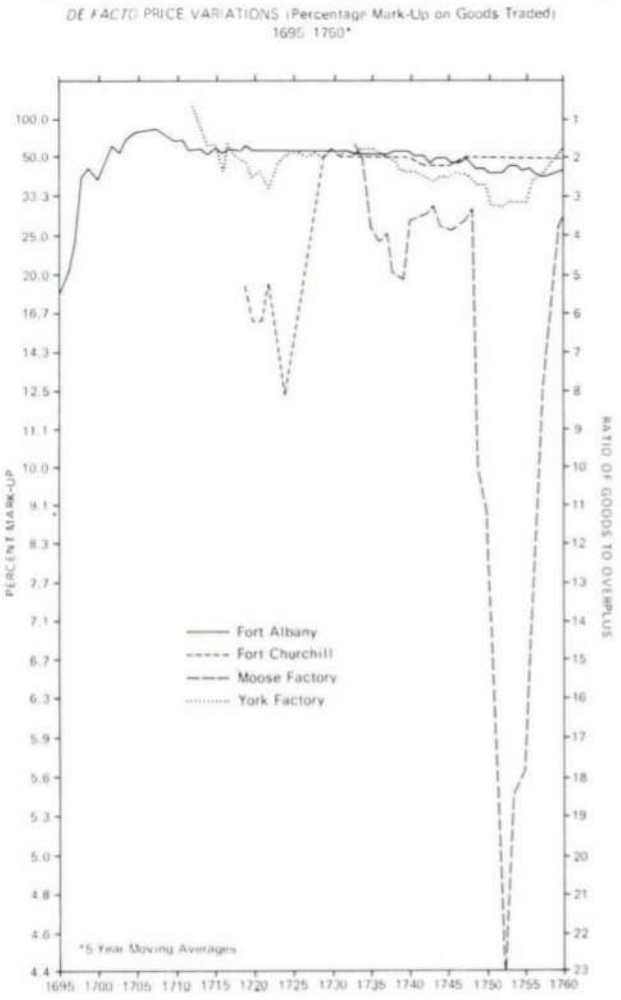
It is clear then that the overplus could not have been used to build up a gift fund as writers, including the present author, have suggested previously. The overplus consisted of surplus furs, not goods, and this surplus was not stockpiled at the posts.

Given that the overplus represented that portion of the total fur returns that had been procured by applying the double standard, it is possible to obtain an insight into the aggregate mark-ups over the standard of trade that the factors exacted by calculating the ratio of the unit of overplus gained per unit of goods traded. For example, if the traders obtained one unit of overplus for each Made Beaver of goods traded, then they would have effectively raised prices 100 per cent above the standard of trade. On the other hand, if only one Made Beaver of overplus was being taken in for every two Made Beaver of goods that were sold, then a mark-up of only 50 per cent

would be in force. The ratios of goods to overplus have been calculated for four of the Hudson's Bay Company's most important posts located on the western side of Hudson and James Bays. These calculations have been presented in the graph. In order to present the overall trends in the data, a five-year moving average has been employed.

The data reveal several important patterns. In the early years of operation of each of the posts, the factors did not advance prices as high above the standard of trade as they did in subsequent years. During this early trading period mark-ups averaged from about forty per cent in the case of York Factory to as low as eleven and one-half per cent in the case of Fort Churchill. In all probability the easier terms of trade in the early years of a post's operations served to lure the Indians down to the Bay. Once trade was well established the factors began to drive harder bargains as long as French opposition was weak. This was most notable at Fort Albany where, between 1700 and 1740, prices were advanced over fifty per cent for most of the period excepting the latter half of the first decade of the century when a mark-up of almost seventy-five per cent was achieved. At York Factory, actual prices were about fifty per cent above the official standard from the late 1720s to the late 1730s; in the case of Fort Churchill, they were stabilized at the fifty per cent level from the late 1720s to the early 1760s excepting for the slight drop in rates that took place in the 1740s. Moose Factory, which lay closest to the main line of French expansion, exhibits the most erratic pattern of prices. The factors were never able to advance prices here as much as they did at the other posts, and under the best of circumstances, they could not raise the exchange rates by as much as a third over the standard of trade.

*On this graph Moose Factory which lay closest to the main line of French expansion shows the most erratic pattern of prices. There the traders were allowed to lower prices in 1752 to counteract French competition; fur receipts began to rise in the late 1750s.*


DE FACTO PRICE VARIATIONS (Percentage Mark-Up on Goods Traded)
1695 1760*
PERCENT MARK-UP
RATIO OF GOODS TO OVERPLUS
Fort Albany
Fort Churchill
Moose Factory
York Factory
*5 Year Moving Averages
1695 1700 1705 1710 1715 1720 1725 1730 1735 1740 1745 1750 1755 1760

The impact of French competition can be seen in the prevailing price levels at all the posts, although the magnitude of the variation is not the same. After the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the French were forced to withdraw from the Bay and concentrate their energies on the hinterlands. The French *coureurs* led the opposition, but from 1713 to 1731 they had little impact on the posts of Fort Churchill and York Factory. Rather, their activities had been directed more towards the James Bay area. Fur returns at Fort Albany, for example, averaged between 20,000-22,000 MB from 1710 to 1715, but declined to about 15,000-16,000 MB in the middle of the 1720s.

As the graph of prices shows, the Albany traders did not respond at first to the increased French competition by lowering their rates of exchange. Rather, they hoped to counteract the threat by giving the Indians generous presents and keeping a good supply of superior quality goods on hand. This proved to be an ineffective response and the downward trend in fur receipts continued. Meanwhile, the Governor and Committee in London were pressuring the Albany traders to increase their trade in small furs, especially marten. In the face of these problems, Richard Staunton apparently decided during the summer of 1725 that some revision of the standards was in order, and he promised to pay the Indians the same price for their marten that the French did: that is to value them at two per Made Beaver rather than at three per Made Beaver as specified in the comparative standard at that time. In the summer of 1726 Joseph Myatt replaced Staunton and he wrote to the Governor and Committee in London asking them if they approved of Staunton's revision of the standard. Myatt believed that the revised price was desirable.

The Governor and Committee responded negatively to the suggestion, pointing out that although the French paid higher prices for the marten, they also charged more for their trade goods, especially guns.

Although the Albany traders were rebuffed in their efforts to adjust the official standards downward

presumably they could have made this change in the unofficial rates of exchange if they really believed that such a move was required. However, the Governor and Committee had learned to expect a certain quantity of overplus from the posts each year and a downward revision of the double standard would have cut into this return. In 1727 Richard Norton was relieved of command at Fort Churchill partly because his overplus trade 'hath been every Year very small compared with that of our other Factories, and former Accts. from the Fort [Fort Churchill] you are at.' Thus, the first attempt to alter the standards in response to French competition was thwarted.

In 1727 Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye, was appointed Commandant of the *postes du nord* and his appointment marked the beginning of a new phase of English-French trade rivalry in the interior. Rather than continuing with the policy of unorganized expansion which depended on the efforts of the *coureurs* and missionaries, La Vérendrye began building a series of posts from which avenues of northern and western expansion could be pursued. This new approach enabled the French to mount a stronger and more effective opposition in the James Bay area and they were able to extend their influence into the hinterland of York Factory during the 1730s and 1740s. Although they were not able to reach the Churchill River area, the French did have a small impact on the trade of the southern portions of the Fort Churchill hinterlands in that the Indians from that area could visit the French posts that were built on the Saskatchewan River in the 1750s.

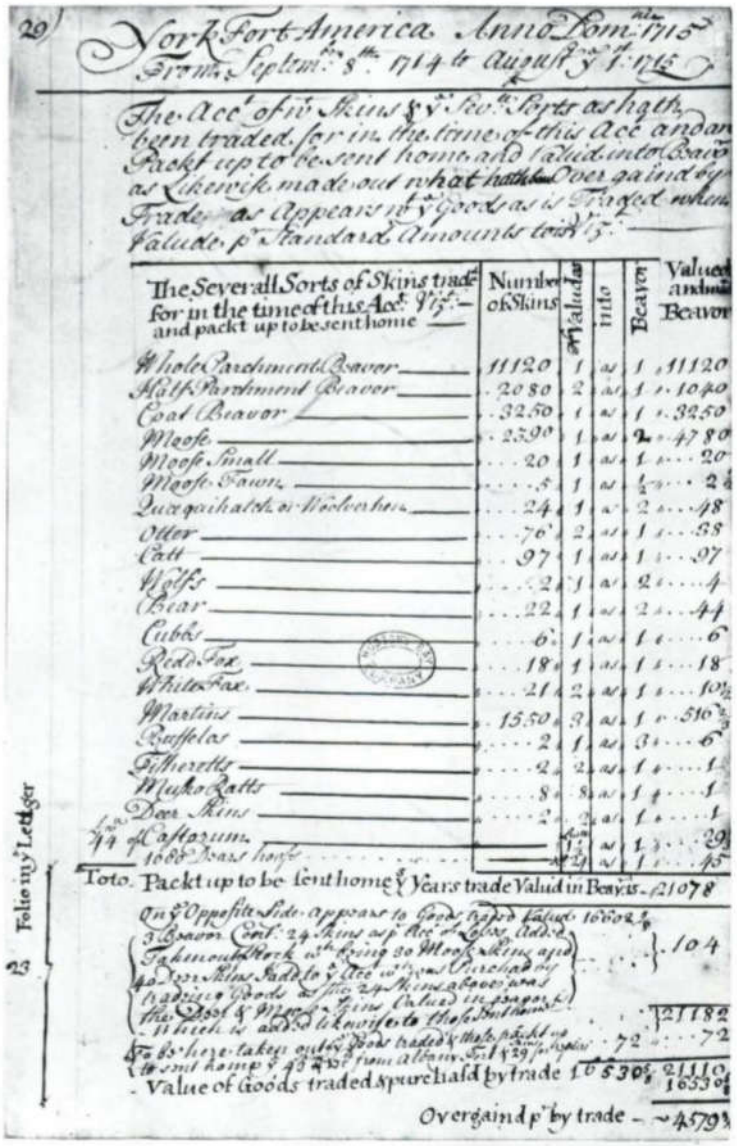
These new initiatives of the French prompted a different set of responses from the Governor and Committee and the factors. In 1730 the Committee decided to make the trade at the bottom of the Bay competitive and to re-establish Moose Factory even though they realized that it would draw off some of the trade from Fort Albany. Although the traders at Moose Factory were instructed to set their books up along the lines of the Albany account book that had been sent to them, the Indians from the outset were offered better terms of trade at Moose Factory than they were at Fort Albany.

These more favourable rates of exchange apparently did not have the desired effect. The Made Beaver value of the fur returns of Moose Factory increased fairly steadily from the opening of the post until the mid-1740s, but began to decline thereafter. In an attempt to deal with this problem, Chief Factor Thomas White decided to eliminate the double standard in 1752 and informed the Governor and Committee of his proposed course of action. The Governor and Committee were apparently willing to go along with the experiment, even though it meant that the overplus trade would suffer; in the following year they informed White that they were pleased with his conduct.

The degree to which the terms of trade were improved for the Indians shows on the graph of actual prices. It reveals that the Moose Factory traders made the most radical departure from the traditional rates of exchange in an effort to counteract the French. Although the Made Beaver value of the fur receipts of Moose Factory did not begin to rise again until the late 1750s when the French were forced to withdraw, the improved prices do appear to have checked the downward trend in the returns by 1755.

The traders at Fort Albany clearly did not respond to the increasing intensity of French opposition by making any major alterations in the actual rates of exchange. Rather, beginning about 1740 there was a slow relaxation of the double standard from a mark-up level of just over fifty per cent in 1740 to just under

*The overplus or 'overgain' is illustrated in this statement of furs traded at York Fort from September 1714 to August 1715.*


29
York Fort America Anno Dom: 1715
From Septem: 8th 1714 to August 3d 1715
The Acc't of the Skins & Sorts of Furrs as hath been traded for in the time of this Acc't and packt up to be sent home and Valued into Beaver as likewise made out what hath been Over gain'd by Trade as Appears in the Goods as is Traded when Valued p Standard Amounts to it's
The Severall Sorts of Skins trade for in the time of this Acc't Viz.— and packt up to be sent home
Number of Skins
Valued into Beaver
Whole Parchment Beaver 11120
Half Parchment Beaver 2080
Coat Beaver 3250
Moose 2390
Moose Small 20
Moose Fawn 5
Quagahatch or Woolverine 24
Otter 76
Catt 97
Wolfs 2
Bear 22
Cubbs 6
Redd Fox 18
White Fox 21
Martins 1550
Buffelos 2
Fitherotts 2
Musko Ratts 8
Deer Skins 2
1668 Bears hoofs
Toto. Packt up to be sent home 8 Years trade Valued in Beavrs. 21078
Folio in y Ledger 23
On y Opposite Side appears to Goods traded Valued 16602
3 Beaver Cont: 24 Skins as Acc't Close Added
Tobacco Pipes & Tobacco Box 30 Moose Skins and 2 Doz Skins Saddle as Acc't with Goods Purchased
Trading Goods as the 24 Skins above and the Goods & Moose Skins Valued in Beaver
Which is added likewise to the Goods Traded
To be here taken out Goods traded & that packt up to be sent home & 43 Moose from Albany Sett 29 Inclos
Value of Goods traded & purchaid by trade
Overgain'd p by trade

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thirty-three per cent in the late 1760s. The failure to compete with the French in terms of prices may be a reflection of the fact that the Albany traders generally attributed the success of the former to the fact that French posts lay closer to the Indian homelands than did those of the Company. Also, they believed that the French were using force and making the Indians trade with them. To counteract these problems, the Albany traders decided that the best strategy would be to build a post inland. Thus, in 1743, Henley House was established 120 miles upstream from Fort Albany at the forks of the Albany River. It was intended that the post would serve as a sort of way station for the Indians en route to the Bay and would protect them from intimidation by the French. The plan seemed to be effective initially and the fur receipts at Fort Albany increased between 1744 and 1748, but then declined again until the late 1750s when the French withdrew.

Unlike their counterparts at Fort Albany, the York Factory traders pursued a somewhat more aggressive policy with respect to prices. Fur returns began an erratic downward trend at York Factory beginning about 1740. At first the traders did not attribute the decline to the French even though they knew that they had penetrated the hinterlands of York Factory. Rather they cited periodic shortages of goods like Brazil tobacco, poor quality merchandise, food shortages amongst the Indians, and warfare in the interior, as explanations for diminishing returns. Nonetheless, by the late 1730s the traders had begun to relax the actual rates of exchange as is shown on the graph. By the late 1740s it was becoming clear that the French were having a serious impact on the post's trade. In 1747, James Isham wrote the Governor and Committee in London informing them 'its the french yt is our Cheifest Obstical they increasing more yn ever, — stop all the Indians yt comes to trade — takes ye best & Lightest of the natives goods & send us ye remainder.'

The traders at York Factory responded to this perceived threat in two ways. As the graph shows, they relaxed the terms of trade significantly so that the double standard dropped below the thirty-three per cent level in the early 1750s. Also, in 1754 Anthony Henday was dispatched inland in an effort to obtain first-hand knowledge of the French and to encourage the Indians to come down to York Factory. An examination of the fur returns for the post reveals that the downward trend that had begun about 1740 came to an end in the early 1750s. Returns fluctuated in the 25,000 to 26,000 Made Beaver range until 1756 when a strong recovery began after the French were forced to withdraw from Western Canada.

Of all of the posts, Fort Churchill exhibited the most stable rates of exchange during the period between 1730 and 1764. This is not surprising, given the fact that the French did not make any significant penetration into the hinterland of this post and, therefore, the Company enjoyed a monopoly in this region. Hence, there was little need to alter the terms of trade. It should be mentioned in passing, however, that part of the reason that extremely stable conditions are indicated is that Richard Norton established the practice of averaging his overplus data. But to be able to do so as effectively as he did is itself an indication of the degree of equilibrium that existed.

Manipulation of the rates of exchange was thus one of the many strategies that the Hudson's Bay Company traders employed to counteract the influence of the French. Most of the adjustments took place in the unofficial rates, or the double standard, and these changes in turn affected the amount of overplus that was obtained at the posts. The extent of price manipulation that took place depended upon the intensity of French competition and the factors' differing perceptions of the reasons for any success that the French achieved in making inroads into the Hudson's Bay Company's trade.

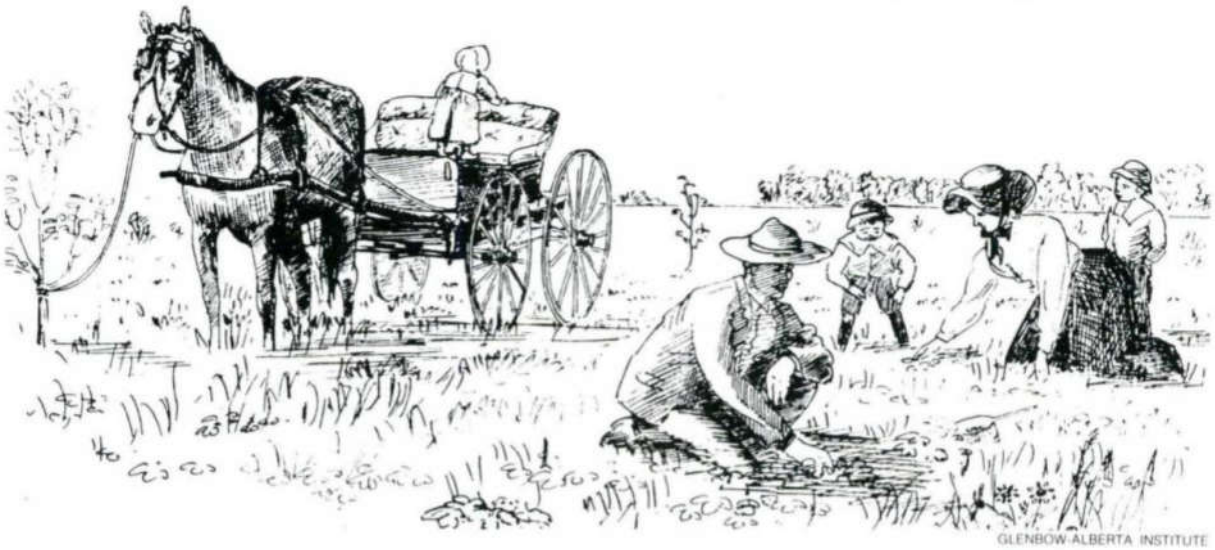
Clearly the Indians actively promoted price competition. To pressure the Company traders to give better terms of trade, they threatened to trade with the opposition. They also readily informed the Hudson's Bay Company men of those French prices that were more favourable than those of the English and were evasive about prices that were not as generous. For example, in 1749 the Governor and Committee sent instructions to the factors telling them to find out what the French standards of trade were. Robert Pilgrim, who was at Moose Factory, responded to this request by saying:

> We are not able to give you any Satisfaction With Respect to the French Standard. the Natives are so Perfidious a Set of People that we Can Not find any Two of them to Agree in Any One Article Except that they Trade one Marten for one Beaver.

The Company was valuing marten at one third of a beaver, and hence, the better French price for this commodity was clearly the only piece of information that the Indians would readily provide.

When the rates of exchange were relaxed at the Bay the Indians responded to the extent that the downward trend in fur receipts that had been precipitated by the French was checked and in some instances a slight recovery was evident. Fur sales did not rebound to pre-French levels and this is not surprising given that two groups were competing for the trade of the same Indian population. No matter what course of action the Company traders took, the French were bound to draw off some of the trade given that they had established posts in the Indian homelands. Some groups were likely to trade off the long voyage to the Bay for higher prices at home. For those who continued to deal with the Company, higher prices meant that individual Indians could satisfy their demand for goods by bringing in fewer furs.

*Picking wild berries: a family activity from the days of the first pioneers. Here, in a sketch by A. A. Brooke, the Brooke family gathers strawberries near Didsbury, Alberta, July, 1905.*



GLENBOW-ALBERTA INSTITUTE

# *The Berry Express*

*By Carl Buchanan*

THE DEPRESSION YEARS of the early 1930s were for us on our backwoods homestead amid the muskegs and stony hills of north-eastern Alberta, an experience that I am certain not one of us would ever ask for again. Yet the depression as such, insofar as my father and mother and we five children were concerned, was really nothing new. Father's financial situation had never been what might be called comfortable. A normal financial situation in father's case would be somewhere in the range between desperate and critical. With the unwelcome and unannounced arrival of the depression on the scene, the situation shifted from critical to acute.

During the one year since our arrival in the district in 1930, tremendous progress had been made in transforming our little community of Spruce Canyon into a suitable place for humans to dwell. First, a log school had been built, so that all of us young 'bush hoppers' might be assured of, at least, a grade-eight education. Several large mud-holes on the main road into the area had been corduroyed with logs, and a couple of them had even been given a thin coating of earth to cushion the bumps. A few log culverts had appeared here and there on the worst of the creeks, and most of the trails had had enough large trees felled along their route to ensure safe passage to a homesteader with a hayrack on his rig. Most of this work had been accomplished by the homesteaders themselves either working out their taxes or repaying a beneficent government the eight or ten dollars a month which had been allotted to them in what was known as relief.

We ourselves did not qualify for relief. We had a few head of cattle, a brood sow, and thirty-five hens, which although they were actually more of a liability than an asset, still disqualified us for the dole. We did not suffer the pangs of hunger as a result of this minor setback, for we had an adequate income from our cows, at least during the summer months. Our cows produced about one five-gallon can of cream each week. This was carefully stored down the well until Saturday, when it was loaded on the Bennett buggy which father had manufactured from the running gear of his old 490 Chevrolet. It had no tires or tubes, but father had wound strips of old tires around the wheel rims and fastened them securely with haywire; this was better than no tires at all. In this wagon the cream was hauled sixteen miles to town. We got about three dollars each week from the sale of this cream — ample income to support a family of only seven people with the store-bought items that we regarded as necessities: tea, sugar, beans, rice and macaroni and father's plug or two of tobacco.

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*Mr Buchanan, who lives today in Penticton, B.C., tells of a family berry-picking expedition that provided cash for binder twine in the 1930s.*

We supplemented this bounty with deer meat, fish, prairie chicken, ruffed grouse, and an endless variety of home-grown vegetables and wild fruit. At times we even had eggs, when we were fortunate enough to find a hen's nest in the brushy jungle surrounding our farmstead.

By the summer of 1931 we had wrested thirty acres from the hodge-podge of tangled deadfalls, scrub brush, and stone. This was seeded to wheat and oats, and the crop looked pretty good. As a matter of fact when viewed from a little distance it was hard to see the ground, and our wheat was filling out nicely under the hot summer sun. It would go, father asserted with great satisfaction, at least twenty-five bushels to the acre. When that crop was harvested our next year's supply of flour would be assured, as father would take a load to the flour mill some twenty-five miles away, at Radway.

This promise of a bountiful harvest posed a financial problem, however, for if one has a crop, one also has certain expenses which must be incurred in the harvesting. I came to wonder at times if perhaps some of our neighbours who only had two or three acres of crops might possibly be better off than we were, as they had less to worry about. We needed twine of course, at least fifty pounds, father said, and also a new canvas for our ancient Massey-Harris binder. After much poring through the pages of Macleod's catalogue and a great deal of figuring, father announced hopelessly that he needed at least fifteen dollars to harvest that crop, exclusive of threshing. While fifteen dollars does not look like very much, still, one of the laws of economics states that when one has nothing at all, then not much becomes quite a lot. So far as I know, up until this time credit had not yet been invented, or if it had, it was just lying dormant somewhere. At any rate it was not available to us.

As was usually the case in times of extreme crisis, it was mother who thought of the solution to the problem. The raspberries were ripening and there were lots of them at Long Lake, some fifteen miles back in the bush from our stump ranch. An entire platoon of us, she said, would journey to Long Lake and pick raspberries for three days. Then it would be a simple matter for her to haul them by team and Bennett buggy for forty miles to the town of Lamont, where a horde of raspberry-pie lovers would swarm around our rig clamouring to buy them. Her enthusiastic description of our reception at Lamont sounded like forty-nine cent day at The Bay. The raspberry express would leave for Long Lake the following morning before the mosquitoes were up. Only one guard was to remain at home to milk the cows and keep the sow out of the garden.

By the time the sun had put in its appearance the next morning, we had progressed a distance of seven mud-holes, five steep hills and two or three muskegs on the trail to Long Lake. Our wagon box was packed with camping gear, grub, and an assortment of emergency items such as father's rifle, axe, cross-cut saw, logging chains, ropes and old binder canvases to make a shelter. Topping off the load and taking up at least half the available space, was a vast assortment of wash-tubs, old cream-separator tanks, kettles, water buckets, empty lard and syrup tins, and even mother's huge bread-mixing pan. These, we hoped, would all be filled to the brim with luscious raspberries on our return.

In the early afternoon we descended the precipitous hills to the valley bottom in which the lake lay and ground to a halt upon a patch of high ground beside the lake. The mosquitoes had somehow caught wind of our impending arrival, and met us by the thousands. Father leaped down and started unhitching the team and shouting to us boys to hurry and get a smudge going before they ate us alive. We built a huge fire of dry wood; when it had got burning furiously we covered it with damp rotting logs and sod. It was large enough to last all the while we would be gone picking berries. Our horses would not stray far from the smudge, we knew, so father just turned them loose with bells on, to graze. Mother, meanwhile, had been engaged in a burst of frenzied activity, and the mouth-watering aroma of frying home-cured bacon wafted into the wilderness; the coffee simmered gently in a syrup tin alongside of her own small bonfire. We were soon seated on various pieces of equipment and eating while a half dozen hungry whisky-jacks flitted about, eagerly awaiting an opportunity to snatch anything we might have to offer.

Our raspberry-picking grounds lay about five miles up the lake, and on the opposite side of the water, so of course this called for some form of water transport. Luckily, in the reeds at the lake-shore close by, were a pair of dilapidated boats which, with a bit of patching and mending, might be made seaworthy enough to get us there. One of these so-called boats was a large craft, about twenty feet in length and six feet across the beam. She displayed a completely new concept in boat construction, for she was made of spruce shiplap and her seams were caulked with tar. She had evidently been intended for a cabin cruiser, for her ribs extended some four feet in height; then the builder had either run short of materials or ambition. The cladding on her hull extended perhaps a foot and a half in depth up her sides and from there her bare ribs poked skyward another two and a half feet. There were no oars but father soon provided some by nailing scraps of board to the ends of small poles. She had no seats, either, but this did not really matter, as we had plenty of buckets. Although she had several inches of water in her — which was all she could have, as she was resting on the bottom when we found her — she actually floated after we bailed her out, and father declared confidently that

BUCHANAN COLLECTION

*The Berry Express was the family's Bennett buggy — so named for the Prime Minister of Canada in those depression years. In the buggy are the author's father and mother.*

she was just as unsinkable as the *Titanic*. I suggested to father that we name her the *Doubtful*, as in my view it was doubtful that she would float long enough to move five miles up the lake. He did not appreciate my comment and countered with one of his: that I shut up and start packing cargo.

The second craft we found lying in the reeds on the lake-shore was an ancient, rotting fishing smack about eleven feet long. She lay on the bottom almost filled with water; a small muskrat house adorned her pointed prow. After disposing of the muskrat house and bailing her out, she rose sluggishly to the surface with a gurgling sigh, as though reluctant to be disturbed. She could, so father said, be made seaworthy with a minimum of effort, and we should take her along to use as a fishing smack at camp, as the *Doubtful* was much too heavy and cumbersome for that purpose. We turned her bottom side up and caulked her gaping seams with strips of canvas and rags, drove a few nails into her rotten boards here and there, and made a set of oars. The crew consisted of myself, as oarsman, and my younger sister, Iris, who would ride as a passenger and wield the bailing bucket. My cargo consisted mostly of pots and pans, wash-tubs, buckets, and other assorted hardware, most of which was light in weight, but took up a great deal of space. When loaded, our craft looked like a consignment of goods for a hardware store.

We sailed about mid-afternoon, the *Doubtful* under father's command, in the lead. Father and my brothers, Cliff and Alan, paddled vigorously, and mother, with her bailing bucket, stood in the stern. I fell in behind in my battered and water-logged old tub. Iris perched precariously on the pointed bow, her feet in a wash-tub to prevent getting her shoes wet, while I struggled with the cumbersome oars in a vain effort to keep up. My craft was leaking badly, I soon discovered, and I shouted to Iris to man one of our buckets and start heaving water, lest we go to the bottom. The other sailors drew ever farther ahead in their strange-looking craft, with its naked ribs pointing grotesquely at the sky; they probably looked, I reflected, like a party of head hunters setting out from the Island of Poonga Poonga.

After three hours of gruelling labour at the oars, we finally rounded a sandy point to see the *Doubtful* resting close ashore, and the smoke of a campfire drifting lazily upward through the trees. Father and my two brothers were well along in building a shelter, and mother was already topping off her first bucket of berries. My sodden craft, overloaded as she was by the water in her bilges ran hard aground some ten feet from shore, and settled on the bottom. Iris disembarked in a state of high dudgeon and splashed ashore, her shoes squishing water and her stockings dragging round her ankles. I hastily off-loaded my hardware, and approached the scene of the shelter-building operation with a wash-tub in either hand.

Father had borrowed the design for our shelter from the Indians. A circle of slender poles about ten feet in diameter was girdled around the bottom with several old binder canvases and scraps of tarpaulin. Any real

GLENBOW-ALBERTA INSTITUTE

*Homesteaders on a berry-picking expedition near Sedalia, Alberta, some twenty years before the formation of the Buchanan 'Berry Express'.*

value as a shelter from the elements was purely an illusion, of course, but there was a certain psychological value in being surrounded by walls, no matter how flimsy.

We had barely gotten to sleep that first night on our beds of soft spruce boughs, when we children were rudely awakened by the first timber-wolf howl we had ever heard. The night was dark as ink, and there wasn't a sound in the whole vast universe save the gentle murmur of a little stream just a few feet from our tipi. Far across the lake, the howl started low and mournful, gradually increasing in volume until the air seemed to vibrate with its power, and we sat bolt upright in terror. The echoes had barely died away when a pair of loons close inshore gave with a series of screams, which were promptly echoed by other loons all up and down the lake. As the last faint sounds receded on the still night air, a nearby mallard duck quacked an authoritative opinion of all the idiots who disturbed the peace so rudely, and terrified her brood of young.

I had never as yet seen a timber-wolf, and as I lay uneasily in my bed after first hearing that frightening howl, I pondered about the probable size of a creature that could make such a noise. At least as large as a horse, I calculated, with a mouth as large as a bushel basket, and a set of fangs the size of harrow teeth. When we children all inquired in alarm as to what manner of creature had made that awful sound, father replied casually that it was only a timber-wolf, and clicked the action of his old 30.30 Winchester, to reassure us that all was well.

We awoke in the chill grey of an early dawn to the heavenly smell of pancakes and bacon, intermingled with the rich aroma of camp-fire coffee. A heavy mist lay over the lake, and from it drifted the ghostly voices of its feathered inhabitants and the gentle splashing of the northern pike and tullibees as they foraged for their breakfast. We would have a meal of pike that evening, for we had our fish-hooks with us.

Before the sun had burned the mist away we were busily picking berries, which hung so thick and heavy that the bushes were bent to the ground. Just a little over one year ago, the whole area had been covered with a magnificent stand of virgin spruce and white poplar, but then a forest fire had raged through leaving a graveyard of charred stumps and fallen giant trunks, many of them three feet in diameter .

The ruins of many stately spruce were still standing, their dead limbs stark against the sky and great shards of loose bark rattling in the wind.

We picked berries from dawn to dusk each day, and by late afternoon of the third day our assortment of buckets, pails, and tubs and kettles was pretty well filled. We hauled my water-logged craft ashore and caulked its gaping seams for the trip back down the lake, as I would have a heavier load on the return trip. Early next morning we were paddling down the lake with our load of berries. We found our team not far from the smudge, which was still smoking, loaded our cargo onto the lumber wagon, and struck out for home. We arrived back in time to prepare for the long trip next morning. Our berries were still in good condition; we had kept the containers in the shade, resting in the ice-cold water of the little stream close beside the shelter.

Our vehicle for transporting the fruit to Lamont was our Bennett buggy. Our mother would handle the team and two of us children were to have the supreme privilege of accompanying her. We argued loud and long as to who the lucky ones should be. We could not

GLENBOW-ALBERTA INSTITUTE

*A berry picker, Mrs Mack Montgomery, dresses for protection from insects, in the Dorothy area of Alberta, c. 1925.*

flip a coin, as we had no coins to flip, but father finally tired of our wrangling and declared that we should draw straws, which were plentiful. My sister and I were the lucky ones. Mother consoled my two brothers with the promise they would be next on the list, when she went later in the summer with a load of blueberries.

The trip to Lamont was an event of great magnitude in our lives. We would stay at the home of our aunt, who operated a funeral home in that town and had several children about our own age. We would be able to compare sling-shots with our cousin Allison, and stick grasshoppers to the railroad track to be run over by the train. We always rushed to the station to watch the trains come by, and were, of course, greatly impressed by the huge, black, hissing locomotive.

Our log house was the scene of frenzied activity on the eve of our departure. Mother's copper wash-boiler was filled with water and put on the old iron cook-stove to heat for our baths. We were required to give ourselves a thorough scrub, paying special attention to high-water marks around necks, ears, and feet, and the job had to be first-rate to pass mother's critical inspection. I would be required to wear shoes on this all-important occasion, and I brought out my battered canvas running shoes and scrubbed them until they shone. Mother packed the grub box, and our precious berries were loaded on the Bennett buggy, cushioned on a layer of hay. They were covered with a bed sheet and a binder canvas was tied over top to keep out the dust on the long trip.

We departed shortly after daylight, and made some thirty miles the first day. At night we rested at the farm of a hospitable Ukrainian settler.

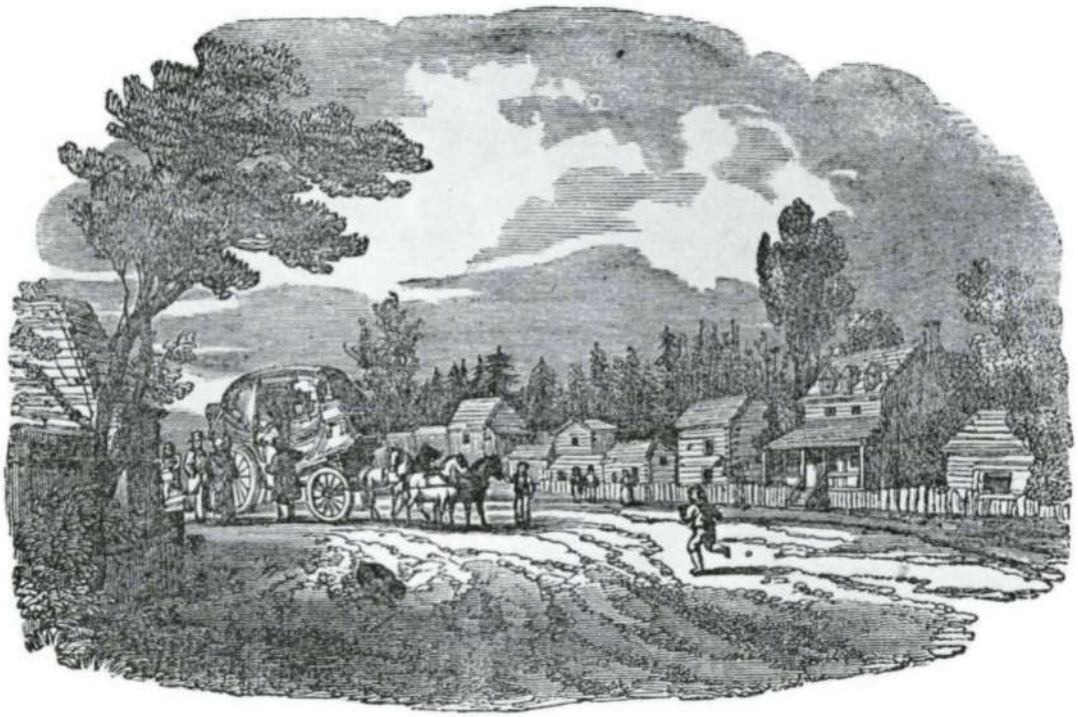
Shortly after noon next day we arrived at Lamont and my aunt lost no time in getting on the telephone to let the townspeople know that the Berry Express had arrived. Within the hour the customers had started to gather, and mother was kept busy weighing out berries all through the afternoon. By noon the following day our berries were all sold and mother had more than fifty dollars in cash in her purse. My sister and I each received about seventy-five cents in wages for picking berries, as mother, in her wisdom, always paid us children a small sum as an incentive when we picked berries for sale. I demanded my pay in nickels and dimes, as they jingled more impressively in my pocket than quarters. I was not about to spend all my hard-earned money in one fling, but I did buy a large bag of peanuts for ten cents, and a mouth-organ for thirty-five cents.

I had always wanted a mouth-organ, and now I had one of my own. I fear the return trip back to the homestead must have been a nightmare for my mother and sister; they endured the caterwauling of my new mouth-organ the entire forty miles. By the time we reached home, I was able to do a recognizable rendition of 'The Wreck of the Old Number Nine'. I fancy they must hate that tune to this day.

The problem of financing the harvesting of our crop was solved and as a bonus mother bought linoleum for the floor of our house. How proud we were of that bright shiny linoleum; ours was the only floor in the community to be so blessed, and how happy mother was to have it to clean instead of a rough board floor. How much more appreciated are the blessings of mankind, when one has to endure hardship to acquire them.

The Berry Express made one more run to Lamont that summer, this time with a load of blueberries. This provided the money to buy our winter footwear, a considerable supply of groceries, and wonder of wonders, a hand-operated washing machine, complete with hand-powered wringer. Mother was thus able to hang up her battered washboard forever. Our crop was harvested in due time, and before the icy grip of winter closed in, father had taken a load of wheat to the mill and we had a year's supply of flour and cream of wheat for porridge laid by. Our cellar was full to bursting with vegetables, and row upon row of wild fruit and other preserves. As soon as the snows came there would be deer meat, and father would perhaps journey to Long Lake with his nets and catch a supply of fish. We sat snug and warm on the chill evenings within the whitewashed walls of our log home, secure in the knowledge that, come what may, we would surely survive one more winter of the depression years, and all the storms that it would bring. ◆

*The Traills travelled along the St Lawrence by stage-coach and steamer on their arrival in Canada in 1832. This scene of the coach's arrival in a village is from 'The Backwoods of Canada'.*



# Petition from the Backwoods

By Ute Lischke-McNab and David McNab

*The authors are lecturers at the Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. Dr Ute Lischke-McNab is with the Department of German; Dr David McNab, with the Department of History and Canadian Studies, wrote his doctoral dissertation on 'Herman Merivale and the British Empire, 1806-1874'.*

CATHARINE PARR TRAILL (1802-1899) has achieved a fine literary reputation, not only in North America, but also in Great Britain and Europe. Her literary output, consisting of a total of seventeen books and many short articles, ranged from children's literature to handbooks for potential immigrants to Canada and the study of Canadian wildlife. Mrs Traill was born in London, England, in 1802, the youngest of nine children. Before coming to Canada, she had already published nine children's books.

Soon after her marriage to Thomas Traill in 1832, they emigrated to Canada. Thomas Traill was a retired officer of the Royal Scottish Fusiliers and upon his discharge from the army he was entitled to a grant of land in Canada. The tract of land which the Traills were going to receive was located in the Otonabee region of Upper Canada, situated near Lakefield, in the Peterborough area. Samuel Strickland, Catharine Traill's brother had already settled in this area and her sister, Susanna Moodie, arrived shortly after the Traills.

The three members of the Strickland family who settled in Canada all became literary figures in their new country, writing chiefly about their experiences as settlers. Samuel Strickland wrote *Twenty-Seven Years in Canada West,* which gave an account of his experiences as a pioneer. This book, although extremely valuable, was too large and too expensive for pros-

pective immigrants who needed a guide and handbook for the area. Catharine Parr Traill's book, *The Backwoods of Canada*, became much more popular because it was smaller and cheaper.

Catharine Parr Traill did not set out consciously to write *The Backwoods of Canada*. A publisher in London, England, came across the series of letters that she had written to her mother, and some letters written to her friends during the years 1832-1836. These letters described her experiences of travelling to Canada, gave accounts of her life as a pioneer and related how she overcame many difficulties and managed to live very happily in Canada. *The Backwoods of Canada*, published in 1836, was helpful to many prospective emigrants who wanted to establish a new life in Canada.

Catharine Parr Traill was distinctly of the upper class and brought with her to Canada strong ideas and attitudes. She had a 'healthy respect for property and a strong sense of family position and solidarity.' Her most important goal was the acquisition of land upon which she could start a family and on which the family could establish itself in the future.

Having arrived in Canada, therefore, the first task for the Traills was to clear their own land and build a log house. Catharine Parr Traill was endowed with an enormous amount of energy. She worked with her husband on the land and bore him nine children, while looking after the household chores (with the help of a maid) and continuing her literary career. Of the total of seventeen books that she published, eight of these were written after coming to Canada. In 1852 Mrs Traill wrote a children's book which she called *Canadian Crusoes*. (This book was later re-issued as *Lost in the Backwoods*.) Then, in 1854, she published a book entitled *The Female Emigrant's Guide*. This book was also re-published, once as *The Canadian Settler's Guide* and then in 1862 as *The Canadian Emigrant Housekeeper's Guide*.

After these first attempts at publishing in Canada, Mrs Traill, in March 1854, sent a petition to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, asking that a 'reward' be given her. This request came after Traill had published only three books in Canada. In her petition, she names two of her books, *Backwoods of Canada* and *Canadian Crusoes* 'and others'. It was rather presumptuous that she should be asking Queen Victoria to reward her for literary efforts. The material advancement she claims to have made for Canada did not actually come until much later in her life when she published *The Female Emigrant's Guide* and *Notes of an Old Naturalist*.

Nevertheless, Catharine Parr Traill certainly believed that she was worthy of some type of reward from the Queen. Desmond Pacey, a literary historian, observed: 'The sisters made no attempt to disguise their sense of social superiority to the impoverished Yankee and British settlers who surrounded them, and though we may deplore their snobbery, we must admire their frankness.' Catharine Parr Traill, who had lost none of her sense of superiority in Canada, believed that she had loyally worked for the welfare of this British colony. One can speculate about the circumstances surrounding her request to Queen Victoria. Her children were close to adulthood and Traill must have been wanting to pass on to them some of the land which she believed was necessary for building a future for her family. Perhaps the land which Thomas Traill had received was no longer enough to support a large and growing family. Thomas Traill had never become used to leading a pioneer life and being somewhat older than his wife, the physical toil in the backwoods of Canada was hard on him. Mrs Traill might therefore have wanted some kind of material gift that would give her family a more secure life.

It is difficult for the state to assess the material value of a writer's literary work. Traill claimed that she had reaped no monetary reward for her family. All she had to show for her labour was her literary reputation and that compensation, she believed, was not sufficient. Yet at the same time she always claimed (in her writings) to have attained pleasure and rewards from being able to describe her experiences of settling in a new land and not to have consciously written for

*Author and naturalist Catharine Parr Traill, from a portrait taken at Easter, 1898, the year before her death.*

payment. She was able to learn a new way of life and share her discoveries with a great number of people. It seemed to her reading public that her literary output was an expression of her patriotism rather than an occupation.

It is ironic that Catharine Parr Traill in her petition to the Queen, speaks of her relationship to Agnes Strickland, a sister who had written a historical book on the Queens of England. She herself made no reference to the many childrens' books that she had published in England. Neither were her two relatives, Samuel Strickland and Susanna Moodie, who had published books in Canada, mentioned.

Catharine Parr Traill may have been trying to test her reputation as a writer. Having a family of nine children to support, she may also have been afraid of the day when she might have to face this task alone and would be in need of financial assistance. She would have also wanted to uphold her rights as a pioneer of the 'landed aristocracy' in Upper Canada. Her nine children would all have the right to inherit some land. She herself, in the *Backwoods of Canada,* had claimed: 'Children should be taught to appreciate the devoted love that has induced their parents to overcome the natural reluctance felt by all persons to quit forever the land of their forefathers . . . that their children may be placed in a situation in which, by industry and activity, the substantial comforts of life may be permanently obtained, and a landed property handed down to them and their children after them.'

Many writers before Mrs Traill had faced the same problems of financial rewards. Some had written while being supported by a patron. Others, who had not been discovered, simply wrote because it gave them enjoyment and they always hoped that someone would take notice of them sooner or later. Mrs Traill had been able to do both. She had achieved a literary reputation — and she was able to survive.

On 21 April 1854 the Colonial Office received Catherine Parr Traill's petition from the backwoods of Canada. The Colonial Office was situated in ramshackle old buildings at Nos 13 and 14 Downing Street in London. The men inside conducted the business of the office with efficiency under the capable administrative leadership of Herman Merivale and, at times, the careful political supervision of the various Secretaries of State for the Colonies. Every day the Colonial Office had to deal with many despatches from the British Empire's 'men on the spot' in all parts of the world and, at the same time, innumerable petitions from individuals, both men and women, for land, money and patronage. Seldom, however, would Merivale and his colleagues act upon the latter requests. It was a time of economic restraint in Britain and the Colonial Office had to obtain the consent of the Treasury Office for most items of expenditure, which in the 1850s was becoming an increasingly

*Herman Merivale of the Colonial Office who regarded Mrs Traill as a 'lady of literary distinction'.*

difficult task. It is noteworthy, and a measure of Catherine Parr Traill's literary reputation, (and to a certain extent Herman Merivale's knowledge of British North American cultural life) that the petition was noticed and acted upon.

The petition itself was unusual because it came from Catharine Parr Traill rather than from her husband and, secondly, it was based in its reasoning on her literary endeavours in British North America. Unlike many other petitions it was directed to Queen Victoria rather than to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The letter was opened and the chief clerk of the North American Department read the following:

May it please your most Gracious Majesty to regard with favour the memorial of your humble petitioner and most faithful servant Catherine Parr Traill authoress of the "Backwoods of Canada" — "Canadian Crusoes" and other works, and sister to Agnes Strickland the historian of the "Queens of England" —

Whereas your Majesty's petitioner having spent many years of her life labouring with her pen for the advancement of your province of Canada, the interest of which she has the assistance of some of its most intelligent members, she has materially served; but has reaped to herself and family no reward beyond a literary reputation. If this memorial should find favour in the eyes of Your Most Gracious Majesty, the prayers of a devoted family will ever be offered with heartfelt gratitude in your behalf, to Him, who disposes the rule of Kings, and Rulers to acts of grace and mercy —

That Almighty God in his goodness may watch over and guard your Majesty and the royal household is the faithful prayer of your Majesty's

Most dutiful and devoted Servant

(signed) Catharine Parr Traill

Oaklands, Gores Landing
Rice Lake Plains
Canada West
March 26th, 1854.

It is important to note that in this memorial Traill asked only for a 'reward' rather than something specific, as was usually the case with other petitions. The attention of the Colonial Office was drawn to it the same day it arrived.

The chief clerk in charge of the North American Department, Arthur Blackwood, was the first person to make the Office aware of this unusual document. But he was unaware of Traill's literary reputation. He sent a minute to the permanent undersecretary stating that:

> The disposal of Land in Canada is regulated by Colonial Enactment, and no free grants are made. I suppose this lady must be so informed.
>
> A.B. 21/Apr.

Merivale, when he received the above information from Blackwood, recognized that he was not dealing with an ordinary appeal for aid from a colonial — one which he could 'put by' or answer curtly. He sent it on to the parliamentary undersecretary, Frederick Peel, with an urgent request:

> This is one of the few cases in which one is tempted to regret the loss of this mode of satisfying individual claims: this lady of literary distinction, and the merits of her husband would render some such recognition appropriate. But the Sec'ty of State has no power to grant land in Canada.
>
> H.M. April 21

It appeared that the granting of responsible government to Canada in 1849 by which the control over domestic affairs — including the disposal of land — passed from the imperial to the colonial government was now working against Catherine Parr Traill.

Four days elapsed before the correspondence was seen by Peel and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the fifth Duke of Newcastle. Peel suggested that a further step be taken:

> No doubt this is so, but of course the Secretary of State could he recommend the grant of £100 (thg) out of the Bounty (!) of course upon the understanding that it should be expended in the purchase of land housed by the writer, to be presented to her by the Queen. This might be done.
>
> F.P. 25

Traill's request would be allowed to bypass the conflict between the desire of the imperial government to reward Traill's literary work and the colonial regulations concerning the granting of land. But, as in all matters which concerned the Colonial Office directly, the Secretary of State for the Colonies made the final decision based upon the advice of his civil servants. Unfortunately the fifth Duke of Newcastle was not one of the most knowledgeable Secretaries of State. In his first term of office he relied to a great degree on his permanent undersecretary, Herman Merivale. This instance proved to be no exception:

> The Queen spoke to me about this and I informed H.M. of the state of the Law. Mr. Peel's suggestion however is a good one if so small a sum as £100 or even £200 will buy any land worth her acceptance. How is this?
>
> N. 25

The Duke of Newcastle was not even aware of how much land was worth in Canada in 1854. But at least he regarded the subject as of such importance that he had asked Queen Victoria about it.

Meanwhile Blackwood was ordered by Merivale to prepare a short memorandum on the petition. Within

*The desire to build up a 'landed property' for her family led Mrs Traill to make her petition to Queen Victoria. This view of newly-cleared land is from her book "Backwoods of Canada".*

three days he presented his report to his colleagues with a warning:

By the Crown Land Regulations of 6th of August 1852 Land in Canada is disposed of at various prices according to situation. The residence of Mrs Traill being, as I apprehend, in the vicinity of Rice Lake, which lies to the East of the county of Ontario, land may be obtained there for her at 4s/ per acre, if it is not all disposed of, or enchanced in value by special circumstances. Thus for the sum of £100 about 500 acres might possibly be purchased for her. It will however be necessary to ascertain at the Treasury whether any difficulty would be made to granting Mrs Traill the £100 or £200 proposed for her by the Duke of Newcastle. If the Treasury make no objection, it seems to me that the best mode of accomplishing the object would be to place the money in Lord Elgin's hands, and ask him to do the best he could to suit Mrs Traill's wishes in the acquisition of land. Unless the transaction is made a private one, it will get bruited about, and I fear we shall have many applications for relief to be afforded in the same sort of way, which it will not be possible to comply with.

A.B. 28 April

The petition was now firmly caught in the trammels of bureaucracy. Before Traill's wishes could be granted it had to go to the Treasury — the financial watchdog of imperial spending — and from there to the British cabinet for approval and finally to Queen Victoria for royal assent. It is no wonder then that Mrs Traill's petition foundered once it left the sympathetic confines of the Colonial Office.

Merivale approved Blackwood's memorandum but cautioned in another minute:

I think Mr. Blackwood has suggested the right course: but the Duke of Newcastle's express direction will be required before we can make the enquiry (privately) at the Treasury.

H.M. Apr. 28
F.P. 29

The Duke of Newcastle requested that this course of action be carried out at once:

I should wish the enquiry to be made, and without delay, — as Ld. Elgin leaves London I believe on Wednesday next.—

N:
30

That very day Merivale cleared that expenditure privately with the Treasury and then went to see the Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, for his approval. He reported to the Colonial Office that:

I have read to Lord Aberdeen the papers herewith returned resptg Mrs Traill—. If the Queen has expressed a positive desire that Mrs Traill shall be assisted in the manner suggested, of course H.M.'s commands must be attended to — But if such is not the case, Lord Aberdeen says he has many deserving applicants who have long been on his list. . . .

At this point the process of assent broke down. After reading Merivale's minute the Duke of Newcastle pointed out that:

The Queen did not express a "positive desire." She only asked me whether the prayer could be granted.— With this answer from Ld. Aberdeen the scheme must drop and Mrs. T. informed of the regulations as to grants of land in the Colonies.

N. 1 May

Any hopes Catharine Parr Traill may have had concerning her petition were now crushed.

By 6 May Blackwood had drawn up the draft despatch to be sent to Mrs Traill informing her of the decision of the 'Queen' concerning her petition:

6th May/54

Mrs. C. P. Traill
Oaklands
Gore's Landing
Rice Lake Plains
Canada West.

Madam.

The Queen having placed in the Duke of Newcastle's hands the Memorial which you addressed to Her Majesty on the 26th March I have received the directions of his Grace to convey to you the expression of his regret that the regulations on the subject of the disposal of public lands in Canada are so stringent that it is now impossible to bestow on any person, however deserving, a free grant of Land; and no land can be procured in that Province except by purchase at prices fixed according to the notice issued by the Crown Land Department at Quebec on the 6 August 1852. It is therefore not in the power of the Crown to comply with the application which you have preferred.

One can imagine what Traill must have thought when she received this letter of rejection to her petition. All she had asked for was a 'reward' and what she received was a letter informing her of the regulations regarding land in Canada. She would never know that her request was denied, not because Queen Victoria or the Duke of Newcastle or the Colonial Office did not think highly of her ability as a writer, but rather because of a lack of 'positive desire' on the part of Queen Victoria and because the demands placed upon the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Colonies for patronage were simply too great. These factors doomed for a time Traill's hopes for land or money to buy land — not the colonial regulations. Traill's petition was looked at seriously by the Colonial Office — and with particular sympathy by Herman Merivale who was aware of her literary reputation in the service of the British empire. Fortunately, although her request was not granted, Mrs Traill, like so many other writers in Canada who came after her, managed to survive and make a contribution to a distinctive and varied Canadian culture.

It was not until the 1860s that Mrs Traill actually received a reward. But before receiving it, she had to endure many hardships. On 26 August 1857, the Traill's home was burned to the ground. The family, barely able to escape themselves, lost everything. Thomas Traill was never able to recover from this shock and he died shortly after, in June 1859.

Catharine Parr Traill devoted the rest of her life to the study of Canadian flora which culminated in the publication of two valuable books, *Canadian Wild Flowers* (1868) and *Studies in Plant Life in Canada* (1885). She received a compliment when a fern *Aspidium marginale* was named after her — it was called Mrs Traill's Shield Fern, *A. marginale* (Swz.) var: *Traillae.*

The fern collections of Mrs Traill were sent to England where they found a ready market and

*Mrs Traill's cottage on the small island in Stony Lake near Peterborough — the land granted by the Canadian government to Mrs Traill when she was 91 years of age. One granddaughter stands on the wooden stairs; another sits on the verandah. Mrs Traill is in the background, left.*

eventually brought to her the recognition which she had always desired. It was sometime during the early 1860s that Lady Charlotte Greville, the wife of a British politician, brought these fern collections to the attention of the then British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston. It was he who was persuaded to authorize the gift of £100 from a 'special fund' to her. No mention, however, was made of her literary contributions. The monetary recognition was solely given to Traill's reputation as a collector of ferns and mosses. In order that she might do an even better job in pressing her ferns and mosses, Lady Greville presented her with a new press. The money was an important gift, for it enabled her to buy a house and lot on the shores of the Kawartha Lakes.

It was not until 1893 that Mrs Traill's literary work was finally recognized by the Canadian government. This recognition did not come initially from the government itself, but again because of a petition which she forwarded to them requesting the grant of a small island in Stony Lake. This island was to have been sold at public auction. Since Mrs Traill did not want the grave of an Indian girl which was located there to be desecrated, she wrote to Ottawa requesting that the island should be given to her. It was Sandford Fleming, government official and civil engineer, who replied to her stating that the island had indeed been granted to her: 'It has been a great pleasure to everyone here, from the highest to the lowest official, to do everything in their power to do you honorable service and gratify your every wish — every one of them feeling that the most any of them can do is but the smallest acknowledgement which is due to you for your life-long devotion to Canada.'

None of these rewards came early or easily to her. The monetary gift which had finally come from her 'mother country' had not been given for her literary reputation, but for her scientific endeavours in describing the flora of Canada. The reward had not come directly from the British government but through the gentle prodding of a lady who had recognized the talents of this pioneer woman.

The recognition that Mrs Traill finally received from her adopted country came very late in her life — six years before her death. It is doubtful that she would have received any recognition at all, had she not sent her last petition requesting the grant of the island. Only after she had forcefully stated her case did the Canadian government become overtly aware of her existence. It is difficult to judge whether this last petition had caused embarrassment to the Canadian government which had neglected her for so long and whether this situation had brought her the reward. Finally, Catharine Parr Traill had attained the recognition she had sought in 1854 from Queen Victoria. ◆

**PRINCE RUPERT OF THE RHINE**

By Patrick Morrah. Constable, London, 1976. 480 pp., illus. $23.50

**RUPERT OF THE RHINE**

By Maurice Ashley. Hart Davis, MacGibbon, London, 1976. 200 pp., illus. $16.75

**WARRIOR PRINCE**
**Prince Rupert of the Rhine**

By George Malcolm Thomson. Secker and Warburg, London, 1976. 238 pp., illus. $17.95

*Reviewed by John Miller*

Rupert of the Rhine is best known for his conduct as a cavalry commander in the English Civil War. Although only twenty-two in 1642 he already had some years' experience of warfare and within a few months he turned a willing but disorganized body of troopers into a devastatingly effective fighting force. He followed the great military innovator, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, in laying great stress on mobility and attack. Gustavus had greatly reduced the weight of the cavalrymen's armour and weapons and made the sabre their chief weapon, but he still used cavalry and infantry together with the result that the former was restricted to the pace of the latter. Rupert preferred to use the cavalry separately and relied on sheer impetus to break through the enemy's lines. The military and psychological impact of this development was enormous. Rupert acquired a reputation for superhuman powers: it was alleged that he had a pact with the devil and that his beloved dog 'Boye' was his 'familiar'. His men acquired a reputation for ferocity and brutality which was much exaggerated.

Besides his dash and courage on the field Rupert was a more than competent administrator and disciplinarian. The Royalist forces began the war inadequately equipped, short of money and with a hastily improvised military administration. Rupert played a large part in overcoming, or at least minimizing, these handicaps and in helping the Royalists to get rather the better of the war until Parliament brought in the Scots late in 1643. This tipped the military balance firmly in Parliament's favour, but time also exposed flaws in Rupert's generalship. Too often, having broken through, Rupert's men failed to re-form and charge again. Unlike Cromwell, Rupert failed to combine momentum with discipline and so was unable to integrate his cavalry charges into a coherent battle plan. This was particularly apparent at Marston Moor in 1644, where Rupert was in sole command.

The Civil War years are the best known and most dramatic part of Rupert's career, but to concentrate too much on that period can give a distorted impression of his life. Rupert's father had been Elector Palatine and (briefly) King of Bohemia but had lost both his electorate and his kingdom, so Rupert and his brothers and sisters were brought up in exile in Holland. While his eldest brother devoted his energies to trying to regain their father's patrimony, Rupert had to work for his living and soldiering seemed the obvious trade for him. His military career began at fourteen but was over by the time he was thirty because there were now hardly any wars in which to fight. He turned his attention to the sea. In 1648, during the Second Civil War, part of the Parliamentarian fleet defected to the king. Rupert became its commander, first in an unsuccessful campaign against Parliament's fleet and then in an extraordinary three-year privateering voyage which took Rupert to Ireland, the Mediterranean, West Africa and the West Indies, before he returned to Europe sick and exhausted, with his ships disintegrating. His naval career resumed after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. Rupert commanded the English fleet in several engagements of the Anglo-Dutch Wars of 1665-7 and 1672-4. If he won no striking victories he avoided defeat and, as always, showed dash and courage in battle.

After 1646, therefore, when he was still only twenty-six, his career in arms was, to say the least, spasmodic. He also spent little time on public affairs, showing more interest in scientific experiments and in his tasks as Governor of Windsor Castle. If the description 'warrior prince' fits only one brief part of his career, the popular image of Rupert derived from his success as a cavalry commander, is also misleading. One thinks of Rupert's Cavaliers as young and wild, busy wenching and drinking when they were not fighting. Rupert himself, however, was dour and austere and became increasingly morose and taciturn with age. A skilful linguist, he was a man of penetrating and serious intellect. He was an expert military engineer and developed a new and more effective form of gunpowder. He also drew well and is credited with inventing the mezzotint. Extremely competent himself, he was highly intolerant of incompetence in others and quarrelled violently with most of his colleagues, who were much older than he was and lacked his ferocious devotion to duty. His dash on the battlefield reflected not so much reckless exuberance as calculated ferocity, underpinned by a strong, severe Calvinist faith (which, again, set him apart from most of the Royalists). Temperamentally he had more in common with the men of Cromwell's army than with those of Charles I's. It was only his fierce family loyalty which led him to fight for the king.

Among his activities after the Restoration, he showed a particular interest in overseas trade. He had heard on his travels, of gold-mines on the Gambia River, and was a leading promoter of the Royal African Company which, if it found no gold, developed a profitable trade in slaves for the West Indian planta-

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tions. He showed little active interest in the Company once it had been established, but showed a more lasting interest in trade with Hudson Bay. He helped organize the first expedition under English auspices of the French adventurers, Groseilliers and Radisson. When the expedition proved a commercial success, Rupert helped procure the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company and became its first governor, remaining in office from 1670 until his death in 1682. He attended the Company's meetings regularly and his secretary, James Hayes, did more than anyone to make it commercially viable.

Of these three biographies, Patrick Morrah's is much the longest and the most fully researched. Morrah suffered the deplorable misfortune of having many of his papers stolen at a late stage in the book's preparation, but it is still solidly based and sensible, if a little pedestrian. It lacks the insight, imagination and lively style of Mr Thomson's book which, despite occasional errors, is much the most readable of the three. Maurice Ashley's book is brief, attractively illustrated and concerned almost exclusively with Rupert's military career, about which he has little original to say. All three concentrate heavily on Rupert's military and naval career, although Morrah also includes a lot of material on Rupert's relations with his family, especially his slippery elder brother Charles Louis. None of the books says much of Rupert's role in English politics after 1660 — perhaps there is not much to say — and all treat Rupert's commercial interests perfunctorily, relying heavily on secondary works: Morrah has apparently not used E. E. Rich's history of the Hudson's Bay Company, although he refers to other volumes in the Hudson's Bay Record Society series. Morrah's book is the fullest and most balanced study to date of Prince Rupert, but its limitations of research and insight prevent its becoming the definitive biography. For the general reader, however, Thomson's book is much more enjoyable.

*Dr Miller is lecturer in history at Queen Mary College, University of London, author of 'Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688', and of a forthcoming volume on the life of James II.*

*Prince Rupert, first governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and subject of three biographies published in 1976. From the portrait by Sir Peter Lely presented to the Company by Richard Hulse in 1794.*

**EDWARD SHERIFF CURTIS**
**Visions of a Vanishing Race**

Text by Florence Curtis Graybill and Victor Boesen; photographs prepared by Jean-Antony du Lac. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1976. 303 pp., illus. $35.50

*Reviewed by E. S. Rogers*

Yet another volume portraying the photographic genius of Edward S. Curtis has appeared. Born in 1868, he spent the greater part of his adult life documenting with notebook, camera, and recorder the varied ways that traditionally the Indians of western North America lived. Curtis died in 1952 at the age of eighty-four. Although one of his daughters, Mrs Graybill, was consulted in the preparation of previous works concerning her father, this time she was directly involved as senior author. In so doing, she has added a personal touch that only a daughter could have done, but more commentary by her would have been greatly appreciated.

*Visions of a Vanishing Race* consists basically of two parts. The more important perhaps is the second half consisting of nearly one hundred 'Portfolio Photographs' in a slightly smaller format than in the original portfolio. The first half of the book combines textual material with numerous photographs. These often illustrate points made in the text, which is the story of Curtis's struggles beginning at the turn of the century and continuing almost daily until 1930 when the twentieth and final volume of his massive work *The North American Indian* was at last published. Proceeding chronologically by means of numerous quotations from Curtis's

correspondence, primarily with Frederick Webb Hodge of the Bureau of American Ethnology and editor of Curtis's work, a rather vivid picture is presented of a man driven by a passion to accomplish the impossible. And he did! Presented are glimpses of the many trips Curtis made to visit the native peoples of the American Southwest, California, and thence north through Oregon and Washington to British Columbia and east to the Great Plains. To complete his lifelong ambition to document the life of America's native peoples, he travelled to Alaska in 1927 to photograph and gather ethnographic data about the Inuit.

Although there can be no question that this book is a most appropriate addition to one's coffee table, and does provide some new insights into the labours of Edward S. Curtis, it is rather unfortunate that the authors do no more than cover, in essence, the same ground as previous publications devoted to Curtis and his work. Though the selection of photographs from the thousands that Curtis took differs to some extent from those in earlier publications, the textual material is monotonously similar, and because of the meagre presentation of fascinating material, one is eager to learn more about the man. Certainly it is time that a comprehensive biography of Edward S. Curtis was written, exploring the many facets of his character and accomplishments. Perhaps such an undertaking is at present being drafted. If so, it is hoped that the omissions one finds in these accounts will be rectified. For example, in the present book no indication is given as to when and where Curtis did his work among the Cree, Chipewyan, and Assiniboine, presumably residing in central Canada.

In spite of this criticism, each new publication helps to further elevate Curtis to his rightful place in history. In the present study a section is devoted to an examination of the 'primitive' photographic equipment he used. Such information certainly makes one appreciate more his remarkable accomplishments. And a further point emerges that is of interest, certainly to the ethnologist. Although not a great deal is made of the fact, we learn of jealousies that existed between so-called 'professionals' and 'amateurs' in American anthropology, even in those early days of the discipline's development. Professor Franz Boas, the father of American anthropology, was one who opposed Curtis whom he considered an amateur. Boas, however, failed to stop the early expeditions of Curtis who went on to document superbly on film, both stills and movie, those same Kwakiutl whom Boas was describing with the written word. Both succeeded in their allotted work in spite of their differing academic backgrounds — one with little formal education and the other with an advanced degree.

In conclusion *Visions of a Vanishing Race* (a race, however, that is not after all vanishing but rapidly increasing in numbers) is pleasant reading but unfortunately a pleasure all too quickly accomplished.

*E. S. Rogers is curator with the Department of Ethnology, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.*

## PRELUDE TO BONANZA
### The Discovery and Exploration of the Yukon

By Allen A. Wright. Gray's Publishing, Sidney, B.C., 1976. 301 pp., maps. $14.95

*Reviewed by W. Brian Speirs*

*Prelude to Bonanza* evolved from the author's curiosity about the derivation of place names in a virtually empty land. It is a well-documented, comprehensive, and readable account of the discovery, exploration and development of the present-day Yukon Territory prior to the advent of the Klondike Gold Rush.

Traditionally writers and the public have been so preoccupied with and intrigued by the Klondike story that for the most part pre-Klondike history has been relegated to obscurity. Consequently, I suspect that many Canadians, and quite a few Yukoners, are under the impression that Yukon history miraculously began on 17 August 1896 when gold was discovered on Bonanza Creek. Wright, who displays a real affinity for his subject, has reversed this tedious trend of rehashing the Klondike by producing a book in which Yukon history before 1896 at last emerges from the shadows.

Any general historical survey of a geographic region for an extended chronological period has its inherent limitations, but the author has overcome most of them by adopting a scholarly methodology. What a historian in Wright's position must do, and what he does better than most, is to avoid the unimaginative scissors-and-paste approach to history. An examination of the bibliography reveals that in conducting his research the author consulted journals and narrative accounts of explorers and traders, scientific and official government reports on expeditions, imprint articles, monographs, biographies, and other relevant publications of varying quality and objectivity. Even though most of what is contained in the book is available elsewhere, the author has exhibited an admirable ability to assemble, evaluate, and synthesize this fragmented information, extracted from a multiplicity of sources, into a cohesive interpretation.

In the introductory chapter Wright concentrates on the presence and exploits of the Russian American Company in Alaska and the European explorers involved in mapping its coastline roughly between 1740 and 1840. The author devotes the next two chapters to a detailed description and analysis of the activities and accomplishments of Hudson's Bay Company traders such as Robert Campbell, John Bell and Alexander Hunter Murray, who ventured into the interior during the 1840s and 1850s to establish a network of trading posts. Their journeys over difficult terrain, the conditions at the posts, their successes, failures and tenuous existence are well delineated. The liberal use of passages from their journals and reports heightens the readers' awareness of the traders' characters and the magnitude of their endeavours.

The scientists' role in extending and refining the knowledge of the Yukon River basin was a significant one, and the scientific expedition and observations of Lieutenant Lavrentiy Zagoskin in 1842 and those of Robert Kennicott and W. H. Dall in the 1860s receive the attention they deserve.

During the twenty years following the American purchase of Alaska in 1867, the search for gold replaced the exploitation of the fur trade as the primary incentive for further incursions into the hinterland. Wright focuses on the expansion of prospecting and trading in the Yukon River basin: the introduction of sternwheelers on the lower Yukon by the Alaska

Commercial Company, the opening of the Chilkoot Pass to miners in 1880, and the efforts of indefatigable pioneers such as Jack McQuesten and Arthur Harper. Wright also deals with the missionary zeal and influence of the Anglican Church under Bishop Bompas, and the enterprising Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka who led an expedition from the source of the Yukon River to its mouth in 1883.

By 1887 increased mining activity combined with a realization that government control over the territory would eventually be required, prompted the Canadian government to dispatch George Mercer Dawson, Richard George McConnell and William Ogilvie on a Yukon expedition. This expedition, which resulted in the most thorough scientific investigation and survey of the pre-Klondike era, is the subject of a separate chapter. Besides relating what transpired on the expedition and enumerating its achievements, the author presents a wealth of information about the individuals connected with it.

The author's account retains its quality and perception in covering the 1890s when the pace of exploration, commercial and mining development accelerated. Wright's explanations of the complaints about mining regulations and techniques to improve gold recovery are particularly informative. He also provides a realistic portrait of life in the mining camp at Fortymile and the men of the North West Mounted Police under Inspector Charles Constantine.

Even Wright cannot completely escape the lure of the Klondike. The concluding chapter incorporates a concise rendition of the familiar yet controversial events surrounding the celebrated discovery on Bonanza Creek. In the Epilogue he summarizes what happened to some of the more famous participants in pre-Klondike history during and after those halcyon days.

While the book is confined to the comparatively recent history of white men in the Yukon it does include the newcomers' comments on and impressions of the indigenous native people and their culture. It is interesting to note the extent to which the explorers and traders depended on Indian guides to show them the way.

The fact that the author has meticulously credited sources and effectively employed explanatory footnotes throughout should silence most of the usual criticism of 'popular' history in academic circles. The seven maps are an integral part of the text and of considerable assistance to the reader in tracing explorers' routes. The subject and nominal index is an additional feature to facilitate reference.

By systematically chronicling and assessing events and describing the cast of characters and their contributions, the author dispels the myths and corrects the misconceptions about the Yukon's formative years. The reader acquires an understanding about what happened and when, but more importantly he is left with an appreciation of why it happened, in what context, and its impact on subsequent developments.

*W. Brian Speirs served as Yukon Territorial Archivist for over four years and is now Chief Archivist at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.*

*'Story telling: a winter pastime'. From 'The Last of the Arctic' by William Kurelek.*

**THE LAST OF THE ARCTIC**

By William Kurelek. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Toronto, 1976. 96 pp., illus. $19.95

*Reviewed by Jean Blodgett*

William Kurelek's publisher, Christopher Ondaatje, asked him to capture the Arctic as it was in the past 'before it is totally ruined by North American civilization': a stipulation which presents both a difficult task and a rather pessimistic view of the future of northern Canada. Kurelek's illustrations and personal commentary do depict the Eskimo of the past, and southern influences are quite successfully deleted with the exception of one major import — the church. The book, in both text and illustration, gives an overall, general view of the north, albeit not always accurately. The paintings are lacking in the truthful detail and clarity which characterize Kurelek's more autobiographical books: *A Prairie Boy's Winter*, *A Prairie Boy's Summer*

and *O Toronto*. The works in *The Last of the Arctic* tend to be more sombre in tone with a rather heavy-handed application. The faces of the Eskimo people are often either not shown or are lacking in distinctive character. Of all Kurelek's books this one alone seems to deal with an alien subject. It does not depict Kurelek's own experiences or close associations. The result is that the reader feels he is seeing the Arctic through the eyes of one who is a stranger still.

*Jean Blodgett is curator of Eskimo art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.*

### A HARVEST YET TO REAP
**A History of Prairie Women**

Edited by Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler. The Women's Press, Toronto, 1976. 240 pp., illus. $20.00 hardcover / $8.95 softcover

*Reviewed by Carol Preston*

'Can you ever hope to weave a collective history from the tangle of individual women's experiences?'

The editors of *A Harvest Yet to Reap* faced this challenge as they sought to present 'an overview of the history of white women on the Canadian prairies in the early years of agricultural settlement'. The end result is an impressive book which, despite a feminist viewpoint, should have wide appeal.

Much of the book's impact comes from the skilful use of original material gleaned mainly from letters, diaries, newspapers, and reminiscences. This method of presenting first-hand accounts has been employed in several of the 'popular' social histories of the Canadian West which have appeared recently; seldom has the format been used so effectively. Two features enhance this book's value to the historical record: the carefully selected and arranged documents and period photographs are organized into sections according to a 'chronology of psychological, social, and political development' (covering for the most part the period from the 1880s to the 1920s); and the sections are linked together by introductory notes which set the primary material into historical perspective.

Aware that many facets of the subject will be unfamiliar to readers, the editors have taken pains to provide background information. In addition to the informative notes, useful supplements are included in the form of brief biographies, a 'timeline' of significant events, a comprehensive bibliography, and an index. (Unfortunately the latter, although detailed, is erratic and not up to the standards of the rest of the book.)

The opening sections of this work present varied glimpses of life during the early period of western settlement when isolation, harsh climate, primitive conditions, and lack of legal and political rights combined to make the lives of many prairie women close to intolerable. Once things became more settled and women had opportunities to gather together, they began to protest some of these conditions. The major portion of the book is devoted to an examination of the women's groups which emerged during this period, and how they went about pressing for political and social reforms. The leaders of these organizations were a group of remarkable women whose activities, indeed whose very existence, will be a revelation to many readers. It is amazing that most of them, with the possible exception of Nellie McClung, have all but disappeared into undeserved oblivion during the past fifty years.

The editors have been wise to limit the scope of their study in view of the fact that they are breaking much new ground. However, the attempt to present an overview has, not surprisingly, led to some oversimplification of issues. Although the women's protest groups on the prairies were unique in some ways, they were merely an eddy in the greater social currents of the time. The book ends on a tantalizing note. We are told that the women's organizations met with some success, especially in the area of women's suffrage, but then the movement 'withered like a frozen crop'. The possible reasons are hinted at, but no attempt is made to provide any answers. Rather than being a definitive study, *A Harvest Yet to Reap* provides highlights designed to pique our interest and to suggest further lines for investigation into this relatively unexplored subject.

There is a bias in the material presented towards the influential middle-class leaders of the prairie protest movements; the editors found that material on the everyday lives of 'ordinary' women was difficult to come by, as were records on women from ethnic and native groups. The time seems ripe for further rediscovery, with the increasing emphasis on research in the areas of women's studies, ethnic and native peoples, and the western plains.

The editors have compared their efforts to the forming of a jigsaw puzzle from a box of fragments. By gathering together some of the pieces and by exposing the many gaps remaining in the complete picture, they have made a significant contribution to women's history, and to the history of the Canadian West. Rasmussen, Rasmussen, Savage and Wheeler say of their offering 'it is a place to begin', and a promising beginning it is.

*Carol Preston is HBC Librarian, and assistant to the editor of 'The Beaver'.*


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### A PORTRAYAL OF OUR METIS HERITAGE

Edited by Joanne Overvold. Produced by the Métis Association of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, 1976. 142 pp., illus. $8.00

*Reviewed by Wally Firth*

This book of photographs and biographies is the first product of the history program undertaken by

the Métis Association of the Northwest Territories. For many Métis, it will be a welcome introduction to their history and should promote a renewed interest in and appreciation of their heritage.

A lot of work has gone into this book. The editors approached many individuals for personal photographs and the permission to use them. Their selection and presentation is first-rate.

Most of the material, pictorial and narrative, has never been previously published. In another twenty-five years, much of it would have disappeared. It is important that the papers, letters, and photos of Métis organizations and individuals be preserved if we, and future generations, are to understand the history and social structure of this group. The Métis have distinguished themselves in every area of life in northern Canada. They have been pioneers in many regions and it is important that their descendants know of the richness and diversity of their cultural heritage.

For many of us, as Canadians, our own ethnic identity is personal and meaningful. We should never become so obsessed with the theoretical concept of national unity that we ignore the richness of our many cultural traditions. When one group understands and appreciates its cultural heritage in Canada — being proud without being boastful — then that group is in a position to make a positive contribution to all of Canada. A person can be a Canadian, a Métis, a Northerner — and be equally proud of being each.

Richard Hardy, President of the Association, indicates in his foreword that the Métis Association's plans include a written history and the development of curriculum materials for use in northern schools. This is an ambitious goal and one that will enrich all of us who live in the North.

I congratulate the Association on its accomplishment in this first book. I feel that I speak for most Métis when I say that this book is a welcome introduction and that our appetites are whetted for the more comprehensive history that is promised.

*Wally Firth is Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories. His paternal grandfather was Chief Factor John Firth and his maternal grandfather was Dinji Cho of Alaska, a famous Chandalar Indian leader.*

The INDEX to Outfit 307, Summer 1976 to Spring 1977 is now available from THE BEAVER Office at Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, Manitoba. R3C 2R1

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**THE LAND THAT NEVER MELTS**
**Auyuittuq National Park**

Edited by Roger Wilson. Peter Martin Associates Ltd., Toronto, in association with Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1976. 212 pp., illus. $5.95

*Reviewed by David Buetow*

Auyuittuq National Park 'the land that never melts' is the only national park in Arctic Canada and merits special attention. This book, edited by Roger Wilson, brings together a number of well-known authors and scientists from various disciplines to present a concise yet extensive background to the park area, covering the fields of geology, archaeology, and biology. Each chapter is followed by a number of more specific references which are given short capsule descriptions, a feature most helpful for the reader interested in following up a particular topic. The colour photographs help to convey the stark beauty of this part of Baffin Island. A detailed, if necessarily small, topographical map of the park is included.

The scenery in Auyuittuq is dominated by mountains, glaciers, and the massive Penny Ice Cap. In the first chapter, Gifford H. Miller and Raymond S. Bradley explore in some detail the glacial history and climatic forces that have shaped this magnificent landscape. For those hiking into the park itself, underlying glacial deposits are explained. Lichenometry, a technique used for dating more recent glacial activity, is presented in a way that the interested hiker could roughly apply himself. Also of interest to the visitor are comments on the weather including recent temperature and rainfall data from surrounding weather stations.

The history of the people who have inhabited the area — from the Inuit, to the whalers, to the present — is well summarized by Peter Schledermann in the second chapter. Here, however, a small map of the sites of historical interest in and around Cumberland Sound would have been helpful.

The section that will undoubtedly get the most use from anyone visiting the park is the third chapter on the living landscape written by Patrick Baird. After a brief discussion of boreal ecology in general (tundra is 'unstable', not 'fragile'), descriptions and illustrations of the common species of flowering plants and birds one might find are provided. Of particular note are the handsome illustrations of birds by Jean-Luc Grondin. They are unfortunately small, confined to the size of the book, but they add immeasurably to its attractivness. The photographs of flowers are excellent and provide a useful reference for identification of the common species. Mammals, a group one is less likely to encounter within the park boundaries, are merely listed.

The final chapter, also written by Patrick Baird, should be read and heeded by anyone visiting the park for the first time, both for his own protection and for the preservation of the park. Information on how to get there, on some of the hazards of hiking and camping, and on many other 'hints for the park visitor' are included. This reviewer ran into one of the problems mentioned when certain necessary food items were out of stock in Pangnirtung.

There is little to find fault with in this book. The authors have conveyed their information with as much economy as possible, without leaving out facts of any importance. If one has a complaint it would be that the format is not large enough to do justice to the photographs and illustrations. Yet, by keeping the book to a size that fits easily into a backpack the editor has increased its usefulness.

*The Land That Never Melts* is an inexpensive and handy guide — a must for any park visitor and a valuable addition to any northern library. In the introduction Roger Wilson asks, 'How can one completely describe, in a handbook of this size, such a spectacular landscape? It isn't possible. What we have tried to do instead is to provide some of the basics necessary to the understanding of Auyuittuq.' They have done an admirable job.

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